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Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

Chile

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MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Volume 15 Number 7

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Editorial Comments

WE HAVE OFTEN argued in these columns that one of the most serious weaknesses of the British Labour movement, affecting even its most militant wing, is the lack of understanding of the class nature of the state. The traditional reformist theory that our British State is neutral, non-political, above classes, still weighs heavy on the minds of millions of working people.

It is all the more welcome, therefore, when a leading expert in the theory and practice of a particular, but very important, sector of the State, uses his erudition, experience, and wit to analyse it from a class point of view.

We wrote in these columns in our issue of September last year welcoming the first volume of D. N. Pritt's *Law, Class and Society*. Now the second volume has been published under the title *The Apparatus of the Law*[1], in which, after explaining the distinctions between Common Law, Equity, and Statute Law as they have developed in England, he examines the role and function of Judges, Magistrates, Juries and Lawyers in the administration of English law, along with the operation of law in the courts.

It is probably true that the working people in Britain are more conscious of the class nature of the law than they are of other sectors of the State. They feel—if they do not fully understand that "there is one law for the rich and one law for the poor", or to quote the lines of Oliver Goldsmith that Pritt takes as the watchword for his book:

> "Law grinds the poor, and rich men rule the law".

But this has tended to be a feeling, a suspicion, or for many a practical experience, rather than something consciously understood and scientifically proven. Now, in a language easy to understand and enjoy, an expert's knowledge is at the layman's disposal.

Examining the different sectors of this complex apparatus of law Pritt again and again shows the enormous advantage that accrues to the litigant with the longer purse.

He writes in relation to case law and "judicial legislation":

> "The poorer litigant is often driven by financial necessity to 'settle' (i.e. to compromise) a case on unfavourable terms, or even never to launch it at all, because he knows that he cannot face the cost of fighting a rich opponent at first instance, with the often grave risk of the case being carried to appeal".

Describing "procedure" or the operation of law in the Courts, he shows, for instance, how what is called in law "the discovery of documents" makes procedure "a weapon of the rich litigant, generally belonging to one class, against his poorer opponent, often belonging to the other". The employment of Q.C.'s is one more addition to expenses hence "one more advantage to the longer purse". The whole system of appeals (necessary of course as part of the operation of law) is once again "of advantage to the longer purse".

DO WE HAVE A CONSTITUTION?

Many a naive foreigner confronts a bewildered bookseller with an innocent request for a copy of the British Constitution. Have we or haven't we?

D. N. Pritt has no doubts:

> "The real truth is that our Constitution—our legal expression of all the matters of law that normally form part of formal constitutions and have the essential qualities that can be labelled as constitutional—is, like the rest of our law, formless but unquestionably present and effective".

And wisely he observes that:

> "Our formless constitution is part of the arsenal of the class war and its very flexibility, like the flexibility of case law in general . . . aids the ruling class in its cunning exercise of power".

In proof of this assertion he gives a specific example which at one or another time will probably have been brought to the unwelcome notice of most left-wing active political workers. The legal political basis for the existence and exercise of our right of public meeting (as for other similar rights) consists in the absence of any law rendering such activity unlawful as such. For in theory the attitude of the law is that if something

[1] D. N. Pritt, *Law, Class and Society*, Book Two, *The Apparatus of the Law*, Lawrence and Wishart, £2.00.

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is not unlawful the citizen is free to do it:

> "But it is not a specifically protected right, and its reverse feature is that if, by or in the course of holding the meeting, one does break some law, or infringe the rights of some private person, one cannot rely on any 'right of public meeting' to justify one's actions, and thus render lawful what is otherwise unlawful. The legal difficulties with which holders of public meetings meet in practice lie in practical problems of where and how a meeting can in fact be held without impinging any law or private right".

The very flexibility of law, Pritt adds, makes it easy for the powers-that-be to "ride on the loose rein"—when the general position in the country is quiet, and to act in the opposite way when things are difficult and when the people are moving into action.

JUDGES AND JURIES

D. N. Pritt has no illusions on the selection of judges:

> "In a country whose leaders boast of its democracy the very idea of the *demos*, the people having any say in the selection of judges who may have to deal with their grievances and misdeeds and send them to prison, fills the establishment with horror—an unconscious revelation of our leaders' deep conviction that only a select, indeed a self-selected few are fit to exercise any important function. Moreover they feel that to keep all judicial appointments in their own hands does much to ensure that the whole apparatus of the law shall be absolutely reliable in any class-war emergency".

It is not that, as in some capitalist countries, our judges are subject to bribes or are for the most part *consciously* biased. Their bias is the product of their background, education, surroundings, of the assumptions of their kind.

Pritt is very interesting on juries and it is to be hoped that, one day, he will treat the subject more at length. At first sight what he says seems on the surface contradictory.

"I feel", he writes, "that the presence of the jury as a purely lay element in the trial of cases could create important dangers for the ruling class". There have been many cases in history (for instance at the beginning of the 19th century) of juries acquitting progressive men and women whom the Government and Establishment have decided to punish through the law. The trials of William Hone, bookseller, publisher, radical satirist of whom we write below in these columns (p. 196) is a case in point.

Yet, at the same time, it is Pritt's experience that today juries are in practice not as progressive as one would expect in cases involving politics. There are questions raised by D. N. Pritt in this section of his work that demand further discussion. How far have various qualifications fixed for jury service restricted the potentially progressive role of the jury system? What role do the mass media play in conditioning the outlook of juries? How can the jury system regain the full potential of its progressive role? We hope to return to these questions in the columns of *Marxism Today.*

LAW AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

It is a great merit of D. N. Pritt's book that, unlike so many "expert" writers on the law, he presents it not as an abstract philosophical conception nor as neutral, non-class, non-political machinery, but in essence as *class* law, today the law of the capitalist class. But he does not do this in an over-simplified vulgar fashion, as if it sufficed simply to speak of and reveal this class aspect.

He quotes the famous letter of Engels to Conrad Schmidt (October 27th, 1890) to the effect that it rarely happens "that a code of law is the blunt, unmitigated, unadulterated expression of domination of class".

Law as well as being the expression of a class relationship has also its own specific development in a particular country, and is influenced not only by the needs of the ruling class, but by the level of consciousness and degree of struggle of those it is seeking to rule, particularly their struggle in the field of democracy.

To use Pritt's own words:

> "In the first place, the law, in its general form and character, corresponds to the economic basis of a civilisation, that is to say the economic structure, forms of property and class structure. . . ."
>
> "In the second place, the whole of a civilisation must be seen and understood as the product of all the forces at work in society. It is shaped and reshaped by the activities and strivings of various classes".
>
> "The law is not, therefore, the merely automatic reflection of a particular economic structure, but takes shape, develops and changes in ways determined by actual class interests and class struggles".

Thus, whilst English law is in its essence class law, capitalist law, it reflects also the struggles of the working people over centuries, and carries within itself progressive elements which are the products of these struggles, and which could be preserved and extended within a socialist society and in the process of developing socialist law.

The morals that emerge most clearly, therefore, on reading this valuable book,

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are not only that socialist society cannot be built within a capitalist state, that it will need both a socialist state and a socialist law, but that it is necessary and possible *now,* still within capitalism, for the working people to come to *understand* the class nature of the law, and to *fight now* to democratise it. In Pritt's words:

> "the working class today has much more influence on the development of our law than appears on the surface, and working people have a corresponding responsibility to maintain continuously the greatest possible pressure on public opinion and on government to secure the most healthy development possible".

To help the British people to understand the class nature of the state is something of especial importance. The lack of this understanding has long been a very great source of weakness. More studies are urgently needed of all the main sectors of the state to complement the pioneer studies of John Gollan in his "British Political System" and Harvey and Hood in "The British State".

D. N. Pritt has set an excellent example, which it is to be hoped other specialists will follow with an equal wisdom and wit.

We look forward to the further volumes of *Law, Class and Society,* the third on "Law and Politics, and Law in the Colonies", and the fourth on "The Law of Property".

50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

We are glad to join with communists and all other opponents of apartheid and racialism in sending our congratulations and good wishes to the Communist Party of South Africa on its 50th anniversary.

We hope to publish an article dealing with the history and activity of this splendid party in our next issue.

The Communist Party of South Africa has travelled a hard and most testing road in these 50 years. While on its foundation it based itself on the principle of non-racialism, it remained initially a predominantly white party. It then, however, made the turn towards seeing work amongst the black South African majority as the key to the struggle for socialism in South Africa. And this has been the fundamental feature of its work ever since. Thus while in 1921, 90 per cent of its membership was white, by 1950, 90 per cent were black.

Its consistent participation in the struggles of the South African people for human rights, its fight against fascism and reaction in South Africa, earned it the frantic hatred of the Afrikaner ultra-nationalists. It was therefore no accident that it was the first political organisation to be banned—as far back as 1950.

When the drive to impose apartheid and to cripple all progressive political activity was intensified in the early 1960's, the party was in the thick of the great battles which developed. And the government wreaked its vengeance on it. Dozens of leading communists—black and white—have been jailed for life. Many others have been executed.

But as Joe Hill sang—"It takes more than guns to kill a man"—or a party. The CPSA lives and fights and once again we greet it.

NEW ATTACKS ON WEST GERMAN COMMUNISTS

In the *Editorial Comments* of our February issue we drew attention to the fact that the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of the German Federal Republic in reiterating their implacable opposition to any unity with the Communists, seem to have learned nothing from the experiences of Hitler Fascism.

Events since have confirmed this. The German Communist Party (DKP) has recently issued a statement to all Communist Parties. This draws attention to an official report issued by the "Security Authorities" giving facts and figures about the increasing legal persecution of Communists—and this under the Social-Democratic government headed by Willy Brandt.

The report states that in 1970, 266 Communists were brought before the courts, of whom 201 were given various sentences.

The statement draws further attention to the fact that in the Bundestag (Federal Parliament) the Social Democratic-Government has given its support to statements branding the German Communist Party as an anti-democratic force and has again linked it with the extreme, reactionary neo-Nazis by renewed emphasis on the need to fight the danger "from both left and right".

The Party declares that the aim of this persecution is to try to obstruct its further growth, and the development of its influence both in the Labour Movement and amongst young people.

Fighters for peace and socialism everywhere need to maintain their vigilance with regard to developments in Western Germany. For Brandt's friendly overtures to the Socialist countries are accompanied by renewed

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attacks on the Communists and on the militant Left Wing in the German Labour Movement.

CHILE OF POPULAR UNITY

We are printing in this issue of *Marxism Today* two articles about the new Chile which has resolutely taken the road to Socialism.

We must congratulate the French Marxist publishers *Editions Sociales* for publishing with such speed a well-written and well-documented study under the title "Chile of Popular Unity".[2]

Its four authors, who collaborated in its production, are A. Acquaviva, a journalist of Humanité who has frequently visited Chile, G. Fournial who has been a student of Latin American affairs over many years, P. Gilhodes who teaches at the Institute of Latin American Studies, and J. Marcelin who lived in Chile for 12 years.

The first section of their book deals with the geography of the country together with a brief historical sketch. The second is entitled 130 years of Republican life. The third section covers the period from the Popular Front of 1938 to Popular Unity of 1971, and the last part describes the first three months of the Popular Unity Government.

RADICAL SQUIBS AND LOYAL RIPOSTES

William Hone joined the London Corresponding Society at the age of 16. He became a bookseller, publisher, and one of the wittiest, most pointed, telling, bitter, satirists of British reaction.

After 1815 the radical movement in Britain re-emerged with renewed strength and in very militant forms. This was the period of Wooler's *Black Dwarf,* of Richard Carlile's *Republican*; of Peterloo (1819); of the reactionary regime of Sidmouth, Castlereagh, of political trials and Gagging Acts.

By 1816 Hone was deep in the displeasure of the Establishment who were looking for the opportunity to "get him", and 1817 saw the three famous trials on three successive days for the alleged crime of blasphemous libel. Everyone expected Hone's imprisonment.

The Government certainly reckoned that he would have little chance of putting up a defence against the leading law officer of the Crown, supported by a judge whose utter "loyalty" was unquestioned. The verdict seemed a foregone conclusion. But Hone defended himself. His defence or rather defences were a history of so-called blasphemy, libel and sedition. He spoke for 21 hours in three days, addressing himself to the jury, and was triumphantly three times acquitted—a great personal victory and one for the radical cause. He then speedily published himself the verbatim reports of his trials.

In 1819 Hone moved again into the offensive with a series of magnificent radical satires against the Establishment, brilliantly illustrated by George Cruikshank. In the early 1820's, with Hone at the head of the radical pamphleteers, there was a veritable pamphlet war for and against the regime.

Published in December 1819, Hone's *Political House that Jack Built* was in its 52nd edition by March 1820. Others followed—*The Man in the Moon, The Political Showman, A Slap at Slop, The Spirit of Despotism, The Right Divine of Kings to Govern Wrong* and many others.

Against these the anti-radicals mustered their forces and struck back also in the form of illustrated pamphlets—*The Real or Constitutional House that Jack Built, The Loyal Man in the Moon* etc. etc.

For many years all this magnificent invective has been confined to a few libraries or in the hands of collectors of rare books.

We must be grateful to *Adams and Dart* for making available a selection of satirical pamphlets of 1819-1821, culled from this pamphlet war, selected with an excellent introduction on William Hone by Edgell Rickword.[3] The selection includes 10 pamphlets (for and against) with 100 illustrations, 70 of which are by George Cruikshank. The price of £2.50 for a 300 page, well-produced book is much below what might have been expected.

Incidentally *Adams and Dart* are emerging as a most interesting and progressive publishing house in the field of social and economic history, printing both facsimiles and modern works.

In recent months they have published, for instance, *Master and Artisan in Victorian England* (the unpublished Diary of William Andrews and the Autobiography of Joseph Gutteridge); *People of the Potteries* by Henry Allen Wedgwood; a facsimile of the Royal

[2] *Chili de l'Unité Populaire*, Editions Sociales, Paris, 1971.

[3] *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes*, selected and annotated by Edgell Rickword, Adams and Dart, Bath, £2.50.

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Commission's Report of 1867 on *The Sheffield Outrages; The Rise of the Staffordshire Potteries* by John Thomas; and a study by Kenneth G. Ponting on *The Woollen Industry of South-West England*.

We shall be returning in these columns to a discussion of some of these works and will endeavour to keep our readers informed of similar publications.

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS FROM THE GDR

We have had occasion in recent issues to write of the beautifully illustrated books published in France in connection with the centenary of the Paris Commune.

We should like to draw the attention of our readers to two books, excellent in content and beautiful in presentation, published in the German Democratic Republic, which has the highest of reputations for the quality of its book production technique.

One, published by Rutten and Loening, Berlin, under the title *Links! Links! Links!*[4] is an anthology of Soviet revolutionary posters and poetry of the years 1917-1921, the stormy post-revolutionary years. The poems are given in both Russian and in German translation.

These stormy years gave birth to a formidable democratisation of art in the sense of opening it up to the people. "The most effective forms of this democratisation of the arts" writes Fritz Mierau, the editor of this work, "were the agitational poems and the more than 4,000 political posters that were published in the Soviet Union in the years 1918-1921."

He quotes from the painter and architect Lissitzky:

> "Our audience was the masses, half of whom were illiterate. The revolution carried out a colossal work of education and propaganda. The traditional book was torn into single pages, enlarged a hundredfold, enriched in colour, and brought on to the streets as posters."

A book of quite a different character, but also most beautifully presented is *German Militarism: an Illustrated History* by Peter Bachmann and Kurt Zeisler of which the first volume has just appeared.[5]

In 1788 Prince Mirabeau, who had lived for a period in Berlin remarked that, whilst other states possessed armies, Prussia on the contrary, was not a state in possession of an army but an army that had formed a state. Engels, many years later, described the German Empire that arose in the '70's of the nineteenth century as "the true representative of militarism" in Europe.

This work of Peter Bachmann and Kurt Zeisler sets out to explain, in Marxist terms, the reason for the strength and continuity of Prussian and then German militarism, and to analyse its nature. At the same time it presents the continuity of the anti-militarist struggle of the German people.

Starting with early Prussian feudal militarism of the sixteenth century, this first volume covers the Prussian reforms and the "Befreiungskriege", the restoration of Prussian militarism, Prussian militarism in the Revolution of 1848-49, the emergence of Junker-bourgeois militarism, the creation of a German national State under Prussian hegemony, the German Empire representative of militarism in Europe, and German imperialist militarism before and during World War I. The second volume, to be published later, will start from 1918.

The illustrations are magnificent both of the military oppression and the continuous struggle against it, and the technical character of the reproductions excellent.

It is interesting to reflect that this is a passionate and reasoned indictment of German militarism prepared and published by the official "German Military Publishing House" of the GDR.

Where but in a socialist country could this take place?

LAWRENCE AND WISHART—FORTHCOMING

Lawrence and Wishart published in June a new English edition of Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, edited and with an introduction by Maurice Dobb. This work, in which Marx first expounded the labour theory of value and his basic theory on money, and which belongs to the corpus of writings of 1857-59 generally known as the *Grundisse*, has not been available to English readers for many years. The only previous translation was that of N. I. Stone, published by Kerr of Chigaco in 1904.

Later in the year L & W will be publishing for the first time in English the writings of Marx and Engels on *The Cologne Communist Trial*—the first big show trial of Communists (it was a large-scale frameup of members of the Communist League)

[4] Fritz Mierau (editor)—*Links! Links! Links!*, Rutten and Loening, Berlin, German Democratic Republic.

[5] Peter Bachmann and Kurt Zeisler—*Der Deutsche Militarismus—Illustrierte Geschichte*, Deutsche Militärverlag, Berlin, 1971, German Democratic Republic

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which took place in 1852. The two main works in the volume are Marx's "Revelations concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne" and Marx' and Engels' "Heroes of the Exile". Among the interesting items included as appendices is an article from the London weekly *Household Words,* by Charles Dickens.

At the beginning of July L & W are publishing *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution,* by C. Desmond Greaves, a sequel to his book on James Connolly. Liam Mellows, one of the original leaders of the IRA, was shot as a reprisal by the Irish "Treaty" forces in 1922. This book, of immense interest in the present situation in Ireland, contains a study in depth of the crucial events from the Easter Rising, 1916 (during which Mellows organised an armed rising in Galway), to the establishment of the Free State and the partition of Ireland in 1922. Desmond Greaves' *Life and Times of James Connolly* will be republished as a paperback later in the year.

In the autumn L & W will be publishing a volume of nearly five hundred pages of the *Prison Notebooks* of Antonio Gramsci, translated and with an introduction and notes by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. It is planned to follow this publication by two further volumes, so that the three together will make up a pretty complete English edition of Gramsci's most important political and cultural writings.

Autumn books from L & W will also include a study of *Auguste Blanqui and the Art of Insurrection* by Samuel Bernstein; the third book of D. N. Pritt's *Law, Class and Society,* which will deal with "Law and Politics" and "Law in the Colonies"; and a collection of South African writings against *Apartheid,* edited by Alex La Guma.

Among important recent reprints issued by L & W is the collection of Marxist essays *Shakespeare in a Changing World,* edited by Arnold Kettle, now on the recommended reading list of the Open University.

The project announced a year ago for a fifty volume complete English edition of the *Works of Marx and Engels* is moving steadily ahead. Following recent conferences between Lawrence and Wishart, International Publishers, New York, Progress Publishers, Moscow, and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Moscow, the first three volumes are now scheduled to be published in 1973. Thereafter about four volumes will be issued each year, among the earliest to be two containing Marx's *Grundrisse.*

NLB—PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

First in the list of NLB forthcoming productions is *Conversations with Allende* by Regis Debray, subtitled "Socialism in Chile". This has already appeared in Italy (Feltrinelli) and France (Maspero). It contains an introduction by Debray and two long interviews with President Allende.

In August the NLB are planning to publish *The Concept of Nature in Marx* by Alfred Schmidt, which was written between 1957-1960 under Horkheimer and Adorno as a doctoral dissertation in philosophy, published in 1962, and of which, as the author himself states in the Preface to the English Edition, "every page is impregnated with the influence of 'critical theory' as developed by the Frankfurt School since the early 1930's."

Also, in the same month, will appear by Louis Althusser (translated by Ben Brewster) *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays.* This is a collection of writings written between 1966-1969 including "Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon", "Lenin and Philosophy", "Preface to Capital Volume One", "Lenin before Hegel", "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" with, as Appendices, "Freud and Lacan", "A Letter on Art in Reply to Andre Despre", and "Cremonini, Painter of the Abstract".

Later in the year it is planned to publish Lucien Goldmann's *Immanuel Kant,* and attempt to place Kant and his problematic in its own historical background and to trace the influence of his work on philosophers ever since; also Werner Blumenberg's *Karl Marx.* The author was a leading figure in the Amsterdam Institute of Social History.

Longer term NLB are translating Albert Soboul's now famous *History of the French Revolution* with a special introduction by the author.

NICOLAE CEAUSESCU'S WORKS—CORRECTION

In our last issue on page 163 we wrote in a footnote that the 4 volume edition of President Ceausescu's Works was available at Collets. In fact the distribution is being carried out through Central Books Ltd., 37 Grays Inn Road, London, WC1X 8PS.

MARXISM TODAY DISCUSSIONS

We would like to remind our readers that we are *not* accepting further contributions to the discussions on "Why Did it Happen?", "Socialist Democracy" and "Socialism, Democracy and the One-Party System".

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Political Pluralism

Sergio Vuskovic

(*The following article was published in* Principios, *theoretical and political review of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Chile, No. 137 of January-February 1971*).

September 4, 1970, has become a very special day in Chilean history.

It represents both a line of continuity, continuity of the harsh and permanent struggle of the Chilean working class and working people, and the culmination of a process of change, a leap, a new quality. From now on the class struggle will be continued not from a position of opposition but from positions that have been won in the mass movement and in the Government of the Republic, within the framework of existing legality, respecting the constitution, deepening the transformations in accordance with the method established by the prevailing constitution for its own improvement, as a legal-political sanction of the changes that have taken place in social life.

How has this radical change in the political situation in Chile been possible? What is the essence of this dialectic of continuity and qualitative leap brought about on September 4, 1970?

Before September 4 in Chile the power of the democratic forces was already in struggle against the enemies of the people who controlled political power.

1953 was a decisive year in the development of this power of the democratic forces; it was a year of advancing unity of the working class and working people; the year of the creation of the CUT (Central Union of Workers) and of the beginning of the political unity of the Socialist and Communist Parties, a unity that was broadened by the peasant awakening of 1958, by the attraction of important sections of the middle strata in 1964, and by the determined participation of the youth and wide sections of the women and slum dwellers towards the end of the past decade, which together with the creation of Popular Unity, as a political and integrated movement, has led to the creation of the broadest and deepest mass movement ever known in the history of our country, and to winning the Government of Chile for a new power, the power of the people.

The aim of this power was laid down in the Popular Unity Programme:

> "The popular and revolutionary forces did not unite simply to substitute one President of the Republic for another nor to replace one party in the Government by others, but to carry out the fundamental changes that the national situation demands on the basis of the transfer of power from the former dominant groups to the workers' peasants and progressive sections of the middle strata of town and country".

The Popular Government

The Popular Power is beginning to assume a concrete form in the present Popular Government of Chile. The People's Government is being established on the basis of such strategic approaches as the Political Pact of the Government and the Fundamental Programme, which is in process of being carried out, on the basis of the creation of a New Government that will avoid the dangers of corrupt parliamentarianism, presidential dictatorship or bureaucratic centralism—all so characteristic of the last six decades.

But the common root on which all these strategic approaches are based is, in the first place, that common anti-imperialist and anti-monopolist attitude confirmed by the whole of Latin American history, and already contained in the prophetic words of Simón Bolívar—"The United States seem destined by Providence to plague America with oppression in the name of Liberty".

It would be a strategic error to retreat in any way from this approach, not only because this was the position of Simón Bolívar, but because it has been confirmed by the daily history of the past two centuries. It would be equally wrong not to end the economic power of the agrarian and financial oligarchies, the two classes allied to imperialism, which we are striving to relegate to the dustbin of history.

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The recent reformist experience of Christian Democracy bears full witness to this fact. By rejecting an open and tenacious struggle against these two enemies of the people they permitted their maintenance of economic power, and, thereby, their political revival.

But the role assigned by the Programme to the Popular Government is precisely to take from these parasitical classes both political power and economic power—which in the last analysis is decisive. These agreed political positions of all the parties and movements of Popular Unity form the basis of their strategic approaches, within which, at certain moments, there can be tactical differences derived from ideological disagreements or wrong attitudes. And if these disagreements harden, sharpen or become permanent, then they become the weapons by which the three enemies of the people hope to break up Popular Unity and its Government. Conceptions will be falsely counterposed—like Marxism and democracy, as if Marxism was not democratic, or nationalism and internationalism as if they were not two complementary aspects of the whole people's struggle. But the favourite weapon in reaction's anti-popular arsenal is anti-communism, a problem that deserves special treatment.

The New Falsehoods of Anti-Communism

An argument continuously used in anti-popular propaganda is to deny that a new regime of the working class allied to the working people has begun to be achieved in our country, and this is an argument that they are still able to use, for never before have the working people begun to govern in Chile. They put before the people a vague and changing fantasy, and we are fighting against it. They propose a Popular Government without Communists; they are intent on dividing Popular Unity, by flattery or intrigue; or they try to isolate the President of the Republic or to put him above the parties of Popular Unity; and their dearest most eager reactionary ambition is to sow dissension between Socialists and Communists.

Anti-Communism is reaction's principal battering ram against Popular Unity, as if in Chile it were possible to bring about changes without the Communists, as if it were not impossible to carry out a popular policy on the basis of opposition to the party of the working class.

But on our side a task of very special importance is to rid ourselves of prejudice, to get rid of "a priori" attitudes, of anti-Socialist-Party or anti-Radical-Party and even anti-Christian-Democratic attitudes, attitudes which it would delight the hearts of Chilean reaction to see us adopt.

It is precisely the proletarian character of the Party which guarantees that its policies are serious, that it rejects all adventurism and factionalism, all rash and irresponsible attitudes. This guarantee is ensured by that principal of collective leadership and that absence of "caudillismo" (cult of individual leaders) at the base of the whole life of the Chilean Communist Party, which has come to understand that one of the deepest roots of sectarianism in the building of socialism in Chile is the confusion of the role of State and Party. From this Leninist conception springs the unity of action at the base that has always been practised by the Party, and which has been even more effectively complemented by the unity of action from above, with correct and fraternal relations between the leaders.

This firm and solid unity at the base and between the leaders is one of the most precious aspects of our Chilean experience, a close-knit, impenetrable net which will bar the way to anti-Communism, reaction's Trojan Horse. This anti-Communism, whoever employs it, will always have but a single aim: to divide Popular Unity and defeat the Popular Government led by Comrade Salvador Allende, our Popular Government one of whose basic tenets is political pluralism.

Political Pluralism

In diverse programmatic statements and the relevant actions of the Popular Government a strong internal cohesion is being achieved, reflected in a policy of anti-imperialist national liberation, developing in harmony with the people's desires, in a clear opposition to the landlords and monopolists. It is reflected in the affirmation of the autonomy and independence of the mass movements, including the Popular Government itself; in its readiness for dialogue and common action with men of other political and religious ideologies provided that they have some progressive attitudes; in the overcoming of all spirit of political revenge (*revanchism*) but with a firm determination to carry out the Programme. On a strictly political plane this policy is characterised by a new concept which has taken root in Chilean social life. As the Programme says "The Popular Government will be a multi-party one". But what is meant by multi-party in this sense?

It means guaranteeing all anti-imperialist and anti-monopolist trends the right and possibility of becoming parties of Popular Unity, with no other conditions of any sort except loyalty to the Programme, voluntarily accepted.

In Chilean political life, the parties have been an element of democracy because, and this includes the bourgeois parties, they have reflected, to some extent, the diversity of interests and attitudes of the different classes and social strata. In the past, even in the distant past, their existence prevented

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that monolithic political control to which the class which held power from the first days of the Republic —the landlords—aspired. In this lies the justification, historically speaking, of the existence of the old parties that were born in the last century, including, among others, the now defunct Liberal Party.

Thus our own country's history presents us with the tradition of the party system, the continuity of Parliament, the division of the State into three powers etc.

But one of the new factors in the present Chilean support for a multi-party system is the fact that the defence of pluralism is an important element, a necessary instrument in the struggle against the monopoly capitalists allied to imperialism, who are trying to resurrect the old monolithic political control once exercised by the landowners.

This monolithic policy was clearly expressed in the attacks on political parties and on Parliament which formed the essence of the programme of Alessandri and of the National Party, and (this is no accident) today such a policy has a firm defender in Eduardo Frei, that man of conservative ideas and the direct representative of that single-party experiment of the late government, which was so decisively defeated. His position is quite clear. In the Valparaiso "Mercury" (12/11/70) he declared —"A multi-party system of government is an error". And he based his assertion on the fact that, in his opinion, the government should have a single political line, and a unitary foundation. The necessity of following a single course is obvious for any government, but, to deduce from this correct premise the false conclusion that "a multi-party system of government is an error" is to counterpose two propositions that are not necessarily antagonistic as the example of the Popular Government of Chile demonstrates. There is a single course indicated by the Basic Programme and put into concrete practice by the Government, and at the same time there is a multi-party system, within this single course, that clearly reflects the democratic decision of the four parties and two movements to advance towards socialism.

In any case Frei's expression of support for the one-party system can be superseded in the light of his own final words in the text which we are discussing when he adds that "the future must be a lesson drawn from what happened in the past". Much will depend on the Christian Democratic Party, and on the meaning which it gives to this phrase, for to insist on a return to the line of action which brought defeat to the CDP Government would be to endanger its own political future, and our country, naturally enough, is not disposed to return to the old one-party system.

We do not put forward the multi-party system as a positive instrument solely in relation to the past and the present. It is definitely valid for the future of our nation, including a future Socialist Chile. On the historic roots that we have already described has arisen the possibility based on our national character for the construction of Socialism in Chile within a new democratic system, and with the existence of several not just one political parties.

There can be a plurality of Parties, but not conciliation between classes, as there was and is in the Christian Democratic Party, for Socialism, in liberating society from the exploitation of man by man, creates the conditions for the separation of political and ideological pluralism from the plurality of classes; the different parties will no longer represent antagonistic classes, but the continuation of an historical tradition and the political transformation of classes and social strata which will continue to exist for the whole long period of construction of socialism in Chile. We see the process of advance to socialism in Chile developed according to the universal norms and laws that govern the construction of socialism; but with this specific characteristic that each party of the Popular Government *has its own historic future and its own individuality indefinitely assured.* That is, if four parties and two movements yesterday gave birth to Popular Unity and today form the six parties of the People's Government, tomorrow they will be the six parties of the Socialist Government of Chile; it could, moreover, be that their number will increase on the basis of broader support for the People's Power, or it could be that some will merge on the basis of specific autonomous and internal agreements and decisions. That is, the Socialist Government of Chile will continue to be a political coalition, a socialist coalition, in which no individual party, so long as it remains a member of the Government, will exercise exclusive responsibility within it.

This clearly means that the rhythm of the process of social and political transformation will be determined in the course of social change itself; it cannot be established *a priori*, but, as we can see, it will depend on the extent to which the working class continues to fulfil its historic mission.

The New and Higher Responsibility of the Working Class

We said that the rhythm of advance will depend on the extent to which the proletariat continues to fulfil its historic mission, as the expression of the growing consciousness and of the aspirations of the immense majority of the nation. This majority will express its will through the diverse democratic organisations and through a consciously shared leadership, revealed in the unanimity of decisions, the very heart of political pluralism. Another contribution of this Chilean experience is that it has not acted as an inefficient brake (as its enemies

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prophesied), but, on the contrary as a decisive factor in the changes that are taking place by the consistent application of political pluralism in the decisions and responsibilities of the government, an application carried out both through party channels, and through the different mass movements, that have their uniting centre in the struggle of the working class, at moments of sharpening class struggle in this period of transition in which we live.

This historic moment and the magnitude of the proletarian struggles puts a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of the working class. This new responsibility is historically determined, but not fatalistically, for history to be achieved demands a determined lapse of time, when the working class, as a class, becomes conscious of the role which it must play in social development. Hence the vocation of the working class to unite is born as an internal necessity of the proletariat in the process of acquiring its own ideology, Marxism-Leninism. From the moment that a subordinate group becomes really autonomous it works out and applies its own specific conception of the world so that its ideas of autonomy appears as the necessary reflex of the political autonomy it has won in the process of differentiating itself as a class from the other social classes. And ideological autonomy is just as important as political and organic autonomy. This working class consciousness creates a new field of ideological struggle and influences the general social consciousness. The ideas of the working class penetrate and influence other classes and all the nation's institutions.

Viewed as a process, the higher responsibility of the working class consists in its capacity to win the support and general assent (by the method of persuasion) of other social groups and to neutralise and isolate the decidedly hostile groups (by the method of domination). In Chile, the action of the working class is expressed by the second method in relation to North American imperialism, the landowners and the financial oligarchy, and as a unifying centre and the sharing of leadership in respect of the other classes that are united or allied in the anti-imperialist struggle.

For the proletariat as the most revolutionary class, the problem of power is posed not only as the appropriation of the instruments of public rule, but equally of taking over of the instruments of opinion, and this imposes a task, (one which is just as essential as the economic and political struggle) of carrying out the ideological struggle and the critique of the bourgeois world outlook, developing everything within it which is progressive, and spreading the outlook of Marxism-Leninism amongst all strata of society.

This means that there is no lack of contradictions within the democratic perspective that we have adopted and that the working class will carry out its historic mission in determined class struggle and to the extent that it shows itself capable of defending the essential demands of all progressive sections of the population. And looking to the opposing side engaged in the struggle, it means also that the forms of struggle that we shall have to adopt in the future will depend on the degree of resistance put up by the old social classes, who will not exclude from *their* arsenal the possibility of civil war.

In conclusion "by its own strength, numbers, organisation, consciousness and class discipline, the proletariat—not in opposition to the other sections of the people, but in alliance with them and in the general interest—will contribute to the success of the Popular Government its most characteristic attributes—its firmness in struggle and its unshakeable determination to carry through and deepen the changes in our society without stopping halfway". (L. Corvalan *El Siglo* (The Century), 2/12/70) That is to say we shall advance in the direction of building socialism as described in our Basic Programme—"The united popular forces seek as their central political objective to replace the present economic structure, ending the power of national and foreign monopoly capitalism and that of the large estates, and beginning the construction of socialism".

This transition to socialism is seen in the Programme as a stage in the development of social transformation in conditions of broad democracy, and this is already being demonstrated in real life, for the concretisation of the historic process of liberty leads to socialism, where the support of the masses will be checked by elections, and by the role that the working people will play in the life and conduct of all social and political organisms. And thus not only will a stable political-ideological unity begin to be established between rulers and ruled, but, step by step, the ruled will become the rulers with full duties and rights, as a manifestation of the capacity of the people to rule themselves and the incarnation of Marx's idea of bringing about a full organic relationship between civil and political society.

The Opposition

But we have spoken enough of the Popular Government and of political pluralism. What about the opposition?

When we start from the certain fact that not all the Chilean political parties will accept the line of advance of the Popular Government, whether because of opposing economic interests or political opposition, we are faced with the problem of the character of our respect for others, or, expressed in

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other words, what political rights will be enjoyed by the classes removed from power, and their legal expressions, the opposition political parties?

We must first make certain points quite clear: (1) The Popular Government will assure political liberty to the classes displaced from power, within the framework of respect for the present law and also of the new People's Law which will be established, so long as they show respect for that law. (2) Not all the opposition to the People's Government is legal; even before it began it found itself, and now finds itself, and will in the future find itself faced with *illegal oppositions* formed by the ultra-right and North-American imperialism. These are the mailed fist of the reaction that will stop at nothing—as was shown by the cold-blooded murder of General Rene Schneider, Commader-in-Chief of the Chilean Army. The patriotic duty of the people towards such groups is to smash them, for the method of political crime is the most characteristic and brutal form of coup d'état, utilised on innumerable occasions by North-American ultra-reaction in its own country, and which it is now trying to export to Chile. (3) The legal opposition, i.e. the political opposition is not homogeneous; it has developed along two main streams—Christian Democracy and the Right.

Christian Democracy

The Christian Democratic Party has begun to undergo a new process of differentiation, the product of its own multi-class composition and of its passing from the position of government to opposition party.

The Party machine and the right-wing sections led by Frei, brought up to consider Public Administration as their private preserve, are trying to find a basis of alliance with the National Party—in developing opposition tactics, full of suspicion and mistrust. These are the typical representatives of the Christian-Democratic bourgeois. They hesitate, full of apprehension at the new world which is opening up before their eyes, and in which, for the most part, they participate as spectators, always fearful, representatives of a class that fears revenge.

The Christian-Democratic centre also seems interested in the maintenance of the Party apparatus, but is doubtful about supporting the right-wing for fear of separating themselves from the Left and from the masses, if they should adopt the blind closed opposition desired by the right wing of CDP.

The left-wing of the Party does not regard itself as an enemy of the Government but as a waiting adversary, in open struggle with it for the support of the masses. It has declared itself ready to support the anti-imperialist and anti-monopolist measures of the Popular Government, that the Frei government was incapable of carrying out.

Today the CDP is beginning to undergo a period of flux which is almost parricidal, and which we have analysed elsewhere in *Problems of Christian Democracy*? Will the results be the same?

To a great extent its future depends on the success of the economic Right and the Christian-Democratic Right-Wing in sharpening the differences between the Christian Democratic Party and Popular Unity, both parties taken as a whole, thus pushing into second place the real class antagonisms. And this shows that *we* too have a word to say about the future of the CDP, that we must adopt an approach that will not play the game of the Right-Wing, but will broaden the basis of the support for the measures of the Government; that we have an obligation to the people to act with a cool head in the face of the complexity *sui generis* (of its own specific sort) of this reformist party.

The Right (and they are the real enemy!), working through the National Party and some economic organisations, form the real class opposition. And they too, from their position, are trying to act with a cool head; they are trying to look as if they were not in opposition, even to seem as if they were collaborating with the Government, with the aim of conciliating it. (This attitude is quite distinct from the really patriotic attitude of the majority of small and middle people in commerce and industry who co-operate sincerely with the Popular Government).

Does the Right wish to repeat its former experience? The conciliation policy of the Christian-Democratic Party permitted the Right to maintain their economic power, and later to revive politically with their old cadres. Doubtless the situation this time is different. Precisely the intrinsic character of the economic and political measures that the Popular Government is taking will this time cause the Right-Wing policy of conciliation with the new government to fail, and "operation bait" will not succeed. Thus a choice of three sad alternatives is beginning to unfold before the Right: (a) emigration (which is rejected by the majority): (b) disappearance from the political field (to which only a few are resigned); and (c) transfer bag and baggage to the Christian Democratic Party repeating at a new level the experience of 1964 (which is also the objective of Frei and the economic Right).

The political liberty achieved and guaranteed by the Popular Government in a legal way, the process of putting into practice the Government's first "forty measures", the "twenty agrarian measures" and the Basic Programme, will give rise in our country to a new political phenomenon. Broad new masses of people will turn towards the positions of Popular Unity and its Government, and, simultaneously, "tactical opposition" will become sick with political rickets, pernicious

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anaemia, until its disappearance by natural death, left in solitude, as political corpses are always left, when they lose the confidence and support of the masses.

Whilst some classes enter their historic decline, for the Chilean working class, and for all its allies, and for Popular Unity, those days have come which only yesterday seemed a distant tomorrow.

The Chilean Road to Socialism

Claudio Duran

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The Government of Popular Unity with the socialist, Salvadore Allende, as President, is fighting to bring about revolutionary changes in Chile.

In its first six months of office the Popular Unity Government has proved that it is capable of leading Chilean society to socialism along what is called a "peaceful" road. Of course, the word "peaceful" is not either an exact or an accurate one. The road is not exactly "peaceful"; it has not been peaceful; and it will not be peaceful. The word is meant to indicate that in Chile it has been possible to get to socialism first by a combination of electoral victory and mass struggle and by transforming the bourgeois institutions. As is known the word "peaceful" has been used to describe a road different from "violent" or "armed" revolution, which has often been considered the only way in Latin America to defeat capitalism. Chile then is trying to find a different road to socialism. What has happened in Chile to make this possible?

International Factors

Every road to socialism depends on the particular and concrete conditions prevailing in a country. And of course, the specific situation in a particular country has to be estimated in its relation to the international situation. In this connection it is important to note:

(1) The existence of socialist countries in the world has been a cardinal international factor contributing to the electoral success of Popular Unity.

(2) The Cuban revolution has been a historical fact of extraordinary significance which has created a deep "anti-imperialist" consciousness throughout the whole of Latin America.

(3) There are great problems and contradictions facing North American imperialism,—Vietnam, the Middle East, the internal situation, etc.

(4) Some of Chile's neighbours have anti-imperialist governments too, which, although they are military governments, are also effective in deepening social and anti-imperialist consciousness. Peru, and recently Bolivia, fall into this category.

(5) Reaction against the fascist governments of Argentina and Brazil has helped to develop anti-imperialist attitudes and opposition to the military.

All these factors are inter-related in different ways and we do not propose to examine them here. But all have helped to increase political consciousness in Chile.

Internal Factors

The main internal reasons for our success have been:

(1) The high degree of organisation of the working class in its powerful trade union CUT (Central Union of Workers). The CUT, created in 1953, was the result of a long process of working class struggles which began in the second half of the last century. It has been led almost continuously since that time by leaders with a clear political understanding. Louis Emillio Racabarran, for instance, the founder of the Communist Party of Chile (established in 1922) has always emphasised that the real goal of the working class was the conquest of political power.

(2) The organisation and development of the CUT took place mainly under the leadership of two Marxist-Leninist Parties: the Socialist and Communist Parties.

(3) The organisation of the peasants became a trade union organisation two years ago.

(4) The ability of the Marxist Parties to develop organised coalitions. In 1958 both Marxist Parties came togather to form the FRAP (Popular Action Front) and this was a very important step towards a broader coalition. It meant the first real unity of

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the Marxist-Leninist parties in Chile. In 1969 the FRAP was able to unite with the Radical Party (PR) a Centre Party, and also with a Christian movement called—Movement for Popular Action and Unity (MAPU) which split off from the Christian Democratic Party (CDP). This is the origin of the Popular Unity which is the broad but firm coalition of Communist, Socialist, Radical and Social Democratic Parties involving two movements—the MAPU and API (Independent Popular Action). This coalition has been an essential factor because each political party and movement represents a different class section of the population of Chile.

In present conditions the multi-party system is the Chilean form of political development.

(5) The students struggles which have been extremely important during the last six years. But they too have a long tradition of struggle beginning in 1920 approximately. Allende himself was once a student leader.

The Middle Classes

(6) The middle classes in Chile developed a general independence of political outlook. This began in the 1860's with the foundation of the Radical Party. In 1938 a Popular Front Government was formed with a Radical President—Pedro Aguirre Cerda, supported by socialist, communist and members of other parties. This was a historical precedent for the Popular Unity. Allende was Minister of Health in this Government, which initiated far reaching industrial developments, one of the results of which was the development of a cultivated and educated middle class. And it can be said that in Chilean society, culture is not completely dominated by the ruling class, but has tended, to a large extent, to be a preserve of the middle class.

This factor is important because the middle class became interested in many theories and, with their relative independence of outlook, became interested in Marxism as well. Thus when the failures of the outstanding figures of the Right and CDP—Alessandri and Frei—became obvious this naturally led the middle classes to turn to Marxism.

In 1958 there were three main candidates in the Presidential elections—Alessandri, Frei and Allende representing the Right, Centre and Left respectively. Alessandri won by a narrow majority, Allende coming next. In 1964 the CDP united with the Right and adopted Frei as their Presidential candidate and Frei won by a large majority. And last year (1970) the Left with support of important sections of the Centre (including the group which split off from the CDP) won against the Right and the Centre. All this "dialectical" interaction between Right, Centre and Left, must be explained in ideological terms. The Marxist ideology brought about a turn towards the Left amongst the middle classes as a result of the failures of the Right and the Centre.

Radical Changes

The unorganised workers and peasants were also affected by these failures and their former political indifference began to change.

Allende however, won by a majority of only 40,000, which means that many workers, peasants and members of the middle class voted for Alessandri. Why? Apart from social and political "inertia" the main reason was the anti-communist campaign which assumed terrible and frightening proportions. Communism was depicted as meaning the devil, assassination on a mass scale, the end of freedom, the abduction of children to Cuba and Russia, the raping of nuns, the assassination of priests and this was in line with the "psychological" campaign and propaganda which had begun to be used in 1958 and was modelled on North American methods.

However, the impact which the Government has made on "inert" people under the political influence of the Right, can be seen by the results of the Council elections held on April 4th. These people have seen that Communism is not "hell" but that this government has done much more for them in six months than all previous governments. Consequently Popular Unity got 49.7 per cent of the votes as compared with 48 per cent for all the opposition parties put together. In the Presidential elections held last year, Allende got 36 per cent of the votes. So that in only six months Popular Unity has won over half of the population. But if one thinks in terms of "people in favour of changes", this percentage is even higher because many Christian Democrat supporters are very much in favour of joint actions with Popular Unity.

Democratic Mediators

(7) Allende himself is another important factor. He is a man of vast experience as a politician and he has been fighting since he was a youth for one single aim and has been animated by one single idea: political power for the people. He has been a Marxist since he was a student. He was an MP at the age of 27, a Minister at 29, a Senator at 35 and has been a candidate for the Presidency 4 times.

(8) The traditionally "democratic" spirit of the Chilean people, the "institution minded" Chilean, is something quite important in this process. This even applies to the armed forces, traditional defenders of the constitution and in the service of the legal system.

(9) The position of the Catholic Church during the past few years is another important aspect which should be mentioned. It has not been anti-

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Marxist and in addition a number of Christian Revolutionary Groups were founded during the last few years, influenced in many ways by Camilo Torres. This may well have affected the attitude of the Catholic Church.

Some Negative Factors

All the above deals with positive aspects. But some "negative" factors also need to be mentioned.

The divisions amongst the Right. In Chile the Conservatives (the party of the big farmers, of Catholic inspiration) and Liberals (progressive and anti-religious) have traditionally fought one another. They only united in 1958. Many bourgeois supported Frei that year. Alessandri won with very great difficulty. The Right knew that this was going to happen, this is why they united. But why did they permit a candidate of the Centre-Right? There was not a feeling for unification amongst the Right.

In 1964 the Right had no other course open to it but to support Frei. The latter won by a great majority and everyone thought that the CDP was going to rule for 30 years or more. Frei was an intelligent and influential leader. He had a clearly progressive programme (nationalisation, agricultural reform, a programme for building houses and schools, educational reform, a stop to inflation—Chile's main economic problem, etc.). He also had the complete support of the USA.

The price of copper was very high in the international market and large numbers of workers, peasants, middle class people, financial and industrial people, supported him. This gave him a big majority in the Congress. He established workers and peasants organisations controlled by the CDP etc. But the internal contradictions of this Centre party became most acute. In the first place, the CDP could not provide the people with a really good standard of living. They had proclaimed their intention of introducing revolutionary changes in their programme—"Revolution in Freedom" which was counterposed to what they called the "Bloody Revolution" of Allende's Marxism. But they did not carry out any structural changes. In 1969 these contradictions produced divisions and some important members of Frei's government resigned from the party and founded the MAPU (Jacques Conchol—present Agriculture Minister).

In 1964, the Communist Party stated that generally speaking, there were two main forces in Chile. (a) Those who were in favour of changes. (b) Those against making changes. The first were to be found in the Left and inside RP and CDP. This thesis has proved to be correct. There were three candidates in the Presidential elections last year—Allende, Alessandri who was supported by the National Party, a merger of the Liberal and Conservative Parties which had been compelled finally to forget their old quarrels, and Tomic, a Left-wing Christian Democrat. This was a further split in the Right by a group who thought that large sections of the CDP and their leader Frei were Right-wing. But Tomic is a quite progressive man and if the CDP had been divided then Allende would have won by a greater majority. On the other hand, the Right was completely opposed to Tomic, feeling that there was little difference between his programme and that of Allende. The "terror campaign" of previous elections was not so effective.

The Popular Unity Government

Though this Government does not follow "the tradition" of other revolutions, it is indeed a Socialist government. There is not a proletarian dictatorship in Chile but the proletariat is the main political force within the coalition as well as being the best organised. Four of the Ministers are workers. (In the Council elections the Socialist Party got 22 per cent of the votes and the Communist Party 17 per cent.)

In *World Marxist Review* (December 1970) Louis Corvalan, Secretary General of the Communist Party of Chile, says in an article entitled "Chile: the People Take Over".

> "This is a multi-party government and its activity reflects the co-ordinated action of all the composite forces. This type of government is consonant with the needs and traditions of the country, because not one, but several political groups have opted for social change. Besides, the multi-party system in the country is more than a hundred years old."

The class struggle will develop in special ways. Popular Unity from the government downwards must defeat the bourgeoisie, the big farmers and North American imperialism with the weapons at the disposal of the Executive power. The government has to be visualised as the representative of the people, which means that only they can defeat the economic and political power of the Right and of North American imperialism. And this demands two things: first, mass movements, and second, a stronger development of political consciousness and more active participation in political institutions.

1971—Crucial Year

1971 may be defined as a crucial year. The capitalist system must definitely be defeated. Although it has suffered many important blows it still retains most of its power. It is the responsibility of Popular Unity to go beyond the limits of reformism to make deep inroads and to bring about revolutionary changes.

It is important to mention some of the chief measures of the government to date:

(1) Congress has approved a measure for

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constitutional reform that will permit the nationalisation of copper and other basic resources. This is supported by the CDP.

(2) The government has taken over a big textile plant.

(3) The government has taken complete control of CAP—a big steel enterprise.

(4) Through its agencies the State is buying shares in the banks. But soon the project for the nationalisation of the banks will come before Congress.

(5) Allende announced the taking over of the coal mines by the State at the end of December.

(6) A more radical agrarian reform.

(7) Decentralisation of the government.

(8) Senior officials of the government acting with a strong feeling for the needs of the people.

(9) Wages have been raised and prices frozen.

(10) The FIAP-TOME textile undertaking has been expropriated.

(11) Diplomatic relations have been established with the following socialist countries—China, the GDR, Korea, North Vietnam, Cuba.

(12) An increase in the pensions of retired workers.

(13) 50,000 young workers took part this year in the construction and repair of schools as part of the health programme. It should be pointed out that the Christian Democrat Youth co-operated in this programme in every way.

(14) Cheap holidays and camps for workers and their families have been established.

(15) A big Editorial Enterprise has been taken over.

(16) The State now provides a half litre of milk daily for every child, free of charge.

Class Struggle

The class struggle at the moment centres around three main questions: agrarian reform, nationalisation of the banks and nationalisation of the mines. The results of the Council elections have been a great fillip for Popular Unity. In the first place, if Congress opposed any important measures, Allende can call a plebiscite—which he is entitled to do once during the course of his Presidency.

Secondly, the gradual decline of electoral support for the CDP (1969—31 per cent: Presidential election 28 per cent: and now 25 per cent) has intensified the internal differences between its Right wing (led by Frei) and its Left wing (led by Tomic). This may end either in a split or in the winning of control by the Left wing. In either case it would mean a greater support for the government.

Tactics of the Right-Wing

What is the Right doing against Popular Unity and its road to socialism? The Right National Party, Radical Democracy and the right wing of the CDP and North American imperialism are fighting on four related levels.

(1) *Economic:* They are trying to create a situation of economic chaos and panic in agriculture and industry. They wish to demonstrate to the people that socialism means misery and starvation.

(2) *Political:* In order to bring this about they are using the political institutions in which they still have power (mainly Congress and the Judicial power) to create problems for the government, e.g. removal of ministers and other high executives and of course they oppose whatever measures the government proposes.

(3) *Plot:* They hope that some sections of the armed forces will back them following Fascist tendencies of this kind in Latin America. And they would even try to use assassination as a political weapon.

The Problems of Power

In connection with the essential problem of power, President Allende said in the well-known interview which he gave to Debray in January this year:[1]

[1] This interview is to be published by NLB shortly under the title of *Conversations with Allende.*

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"We shall have real power when copper and steel are under our control, when saltpetre is genuinely under our control, when we have put far-reaching Land Reform measures into effect, when we control imports and exports through the State, when we have collectivised a major portion of our national production. I say a 'major portion' because in our programme we announced frankly to the nation that there would be three sectors in the economy: Nationalised industry, a mixed sector and the private sector. Now then, if these things—affirming our national sovereignty, recovering our basic wealth and attacking monopolies—do not lead to Socialism, I don't know what does. But there will be no further doubt as to whether we hold real power as soon as Chile becomes an economically independent country. Hence our basic, most vital, principle is one of anti-imperialism, as a first step towards the making of structural changes. Hence the most important bill we have to get through is the one to nationalise copper, Chile's fundamental source of wealth. . . ."

"It is true that if one views the problem from the point of view of building the socialist society, once one has got over the decisive and very absorbing current problems of the Constitution and securing power for the people and the destruction of the economic bases of monopolistic capitalism, other problems begin to come to the fore. As you rightly point out, the problems of the control and growth of socialised productive resources and the new relationships between the men inside and outside production need to be dealt with. With regard to the first problem, you have to realise that one of the outstanding features of Chilean capitalism has been its strongly monopolistic character, although the productive structure on which it is based is quite weak. In industry, for example, less than 3 per cent of our companies control more than half of our industrial resources: capital, volume of sales, profits, etc. . . . Into the bargain, most of these firms, and most of those in other sectors, are dominated by a clique of no more than fifty industrial, commercial and financial groups. Well now, in Chile there is a long tradition of State intervention in economic activities, along capitalist lines of course. Any number of State-controlled undertakings, control of prices and supplies, partial or total control of foreign trade, etc. . . . Thus, from this point of view, we find ourselves already approaching socialism through the ante-chamber of State monopolies and State capitalism. The essential thing is to change the socio-economic content of their management. To this end, we must expropriate the means of production which are still in private hands. To quite some extent, the infrastructure for productive resources and their control has been prepared. . . ."

"As for relations between men, and the possible and desirable forms they may take, you are well aware that this subject has been discussed fully in the Socialist countries and that various standards have been adopted or tried out in practice. We are aware that the subject has not been closed, and without any doubt no one can claim dogmatically that they have 'found *the* solution;' we must draw upon our own experience, which in turn springs from the historical and social contradictions which have given rise to our socialist revolution. Of course, there are certain elements which are derived from the experience of other countries, which are more or less common to many of them: the creation of a new system of values in which the social character of human activity is underlined; reassessment of work as the essential human function; reduction of the impulses stimulating self-interest and individualism to a minimum. In the meantime, we can show that in practice, the management of the concerns in which the State has intervened, or which it has expropriated, is now in the hands of Workers' Committees in each factory, headed by a manager appointed by the State. Their objective is no longer to make profits, but to meet the present and future needs of the people. As State ownership progresses, the planned means towards this end will be strengthened".

If by power we understand the ability to plan, to legislate and to carry out what is necessary to advance to Socialism with complete control of political and administrative institutions, as the result of political movements of the people and of the working class, then in these answers by Allende we can see two related points:

(1) That a great part of political power in Chile, the Executive power, is in the hands of Popular Unity.

(2) That the road to Socialism in Chile at this stage of the class struggle means that Popular Unity must control the Executive power, and defeat the capitalist system in all its aspects. And as has been said previously this can only be achieved by the active struggle of the people and of the working class and their organisations.

Thus the process of fully winning power has still to be completed and the task is a hard one, but Popular Unity is winning more and more support each day and concrete experience of this process is demonstrating the effectiveness of the road to Socialism being taken in Chile.

(continued from page 198)

We announced in our issue of November 1970 (p. 326 and p. 356) that we were closing these discussions, but would publish contributions already received. We repeated this information in our issue of April 1971 (p. 100). We still have in hand a few contributions on these questions which we will publish and then give an opportunity of short rejoinders to the originators of the discussions.

The discussions on "The Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain" remains open to further contributions of up to 2,000 words. As we go to press we have so far received 20 contributions to this discussion.

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Modernism in Modern Life

Alan Bold

The author was born in 1943 in Edinburgh, where he now lives, and is a full-time poet. He has had five books of poetry published, the most recent being "The State of the Nation". He is editor of "The Penguin Book of Socialist Verse". His most recent publication is "A Pint of Bitter" (Chatto and Windus).

It should be obvious to anyone reading the literature produced after the first world war that it is fundamentally different from what went before it. I use the word "literature" to mean work that consciously tries to fulfil artistic standards and would readily concede that popular writing has changed only in its subject-matter. Friedrich Schiller made a distinction between *naive* and *sentimental* poetry, taking *naive* to describe work produced unselfconsciously by an artist sharing all the assumptions of his audience, and *sentimental* to describe work produced by an artist unreconciled to the extant audience. Using these epithets in Schiller's specialised sense, we can say that modernism is *sentimental*. It is work that attempts to extend the reader's, the listener's, the spectator's awareness of himself through stylistic innovations. It often depends on a philosophical programme and feels it must justify itself by recourse to manifestos. Italian Futurist painting required a manifesto, so did Russian Futurist poetry, and as the Russian one was called *A Slap to Public Taste* we can readily appreciate the combative and aggressive feelings of the artists involved. They felt that they had to conquer their public, that they had to educate their public, that the public at a given time was too vulgar, too middle-class, too prejudiced to absorb the unique message that was being offered to them.

Why the Programmes?

The style of such assertive justifications of art is exemplified in Ezra Pound's orders to his fellow Imagists:

> Use no superfluous word . . . Don't use such an expression as "dim lands *of peace*" . . . Go in fear of abstractions . . . Use either no ornament or good ornament.[1]

In other words the aspiring poet would have to, in order to be acceptable to Pound, equip himself with a set of arbitrary propositions on the nature of art. One could hardly imagine Tennyson subscribing to such notions. Of course, the fact that Pound referred to him as Lawn Tennyson might have made it even more difficult, but that is by the way.

The basic point is that artists felt, in advance, that their art was not likely to appeal to a wide audience. They were not willing to take any blame for this state of affairs, and so the audience was villified. Pound went as far as to set himself above his public:

> I beg you, my friendly critics,
> Do not set about to procure me an audience.
> (*Tenzone*)

And yet, as we all know, art cannot properly survive without an audience, so Pound in this case was merely making a virtue out of necessity.

But why was this programmatic backing-up of art necessary? Were the modernists actually producing work of a vastly superior quality to traditional art? Was the public entirely foolish, or was it correct to reciprocate the indifference of the artists? The word "modernism" does little in itself to answer these questions. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "modern character or quality of thought, expression, style of workmanship, etc.; sympathy with or affinity to what is modern". But in literature "what is modern" is not the same thing as modernism. In a letter to Pope, Swift spoke of "The corruption of English by those Scribblers, who send us over their trash in Prose and Verse, with abominable curtailings and quaint modernisms". That takes us a bit further, implying as it does the use of deliberately cultivated literary effects. But Swift would have been astonished at the limits to which our twentieth century modernists were willing to go.

The Use of Language

Let us look at the evidence. If we take the opening and closing sentences of two outstanding novels, I think we can see what modernism is:

> London. Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired

[1] Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays*, Faber, 1954, p. 5.

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> from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft, black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun . . .

Now we turn to the first personal style for the close:

> "And don't you know that you are prettier than you ever were?"
>
> I did not know that; I am not certain that I know it now. But I know that my dearest little pets are very pretty, and that my darling is very beautiful, and that my husband is very handsome, and that my guardian has the brightest and most benevolent face that ever was seen; and that they can very well do without much beauty in me—even supposing—

That was Dickens in *Bleak House,* published in 1853. The opening passage is superbly written, but the prose is absolutely functional: setting the scene in which the events will take place, creating an atmosphere which will envelop the reader. It is superb prose writing and happy to direct the reader to the reality that the novel purports to portray. The ending, which tails off, is supposed to be written by a rather priggish young lady, whose face had been disfigured, but the open sentence that the book closes on is in no way ambiguous. The whole novel is a grid through which the reader is directed to a story transcending the style.

By way of contrast,

> riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.
>
> Sir Tristram, violer d'amores, fr'over the short sea, had passencore rearrived from North Armorica on this side the scraggy isthmus of Europe Minor to wielderfight his penisolate war: nor had top-sawyer's rocks by the stream Oconee exaggerated themselse to Laurens County's gorgios while they went doublin their mumper all the time: nor avoice from afire bellowsed mishe mishe to tauftauf thuartpeatrick: not yet, though venissoon after, had a kidscad buttened a bland old isaac: not yet, though all's fair in vanessy, were sosie sesthers wroth with twone nathandjoe. Rot a peck of pa's malt had Jhem or Shen brewed by arclight and rory end to the regginbrow was to be seen ringsome on the aqueface.

And the book ends thus:

> Whish! A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousendsthee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the

Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake,* which is contained between these passages, was written from 1922 to 1939, and is, admittedly, the most difficult work to be produced by a modernist writer of quality. But the style used in *Finnegan's Wake* has been a great influence, indirectly on most writers, directly on men like Beckett.

Dickens is a supreme storyteller, Joyce is communicating through the sensuous texture of the language of his book. In this sense, Joyce's work is autonomous, complete in itself. When Joyce said that *Finnegan's Wake* demanded a reader's lifetime I do not think he was being arrogant, or facetious, but was proclaiming the religion of language he felt he had initiated. Because philosophically, *Finnegan's Wake* is derivative and questionable, and the story, such as it is, is anecdotal. The substance of Joyce is found in the language, whereas Dickens uses the language to direct us to an extra-linguistic truth. One is reminded here of Wittgenstein's remark that his propositions were steps that the reader must climb beyond: "He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it".[2] In other words Wittgenstein saw his philosophy as a method of reaching truth, not as an end in itself. Dickens's novels are similarly inclined. But for Joyce the reader begins and ends with the language itself.

Functional and Autonomous Art

We could make similar contrasts in the other arts: between Berlioz and Boulez, for example, or between Courbet and Picasso. In the nineteenth century artists used their art as a means; the modernists use their art as an end. We have observed this phenomenon in prose, so I think it would be instructive to see if the same dichotomy between functional and autonomous art obtains in poetry.

First, John Davidson's 'In Romney Marsh' from his *Ballads and Songs* of 1894:

> As I went down to Dymchurch Wall,
> I heard the South sing o'er the land;
> I saw the yellow sunlight fall
> On knolls where Norman churches stand.
>
> And ringing shrilly, taut and lithe,
> Within the wind a core of sound,
> The wire from Romney town to Hythe
> Alone its airy journey wound.
>
> A veil of purple vapour flowed
> And trailed its fringe along the Straits;
> The upper air like sapphire glowed;
> And roses filled Heaven's central gates.

[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*' Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 151.

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Masts in the offing wagged their tops;
The swinging waves pealed on the shore;
The saffron beach, all diamond drops
And beads of surge, prolonged the roar.

As I came up from Dymchurch Wall,
I saw above the Downs' low crest
The crimson brands of sunset fall,
Flicker and fade from out the west.

Night sank: like flakes of silver fire
The stars in one great shower came down;
Shrill blew the wind; and shrill the wire
Rang out from Hythe to Romney town.

The darkly shining salt sea drops
Streamed as the waves clashed on the shore;
The beach, with all its organ stops
Pealing again, prolonged the roar.

Now that poem is an explicit description of a scene, and leaves us I think with a strong visual impression of what is described. It is functional in that it draws attention to something outside itself. Against that I would set T. S. Eliot's 'Sweeney Among the Nightingales' from *Poems*, 1920:

Apeneck Sweeney spread his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the hornèd gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees.

Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee-cup,
Reorganised upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
The waiter brings in oranges
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes;

The silent vertebrate in brown
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws:
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league;
Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in,
Branches of wistaria
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid siftings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

Ostensibly this is a narative, descriptive poem, but its meaning is elusive and we could certainly not paraphrase its content in any precise way. It makes its impact, not with the reality it is describing but through the memorable phrases that linger in the memory: "and hushed the shrunken seas", "the silent vertebrate in brown", "branches of wistaria", and especially the magnificent closing quatrain.

Use of "Meaning"

Eliot has said "The chief use of the 'meaning' of a poem, in the ordinary sense, may be . . . to satisfy one habit of the reader, to keep his mind diverted and quiet, while the poem does its work upon him".[3] Thus paraphrasable meaning is not what Eliot is after, but rather an effect induced by the words themselves, though of course he observes syntactical patterns. Eliot has spoken of "auditory imagination" in these terms:

> What I call the "auditory imagination" is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilised mentality.[4]

This helps us to understand what Eliot was trying to do in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" because it does fuse the trite (coffee-cups, stockings) with the most ancient and civilised mentality (Agamemnon), and it also tells us that any lack of rational narrative development in the poem is quite deliberate. It is in face of this difficulty of modern poetry that we can understand why Jean Paul Sartre has said that "poets are men who refuse to 'utilise' language . . . In fact the poet has withdrawn from language-instrument in a single

[3] T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*.
[4] T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*.

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movement. Once and for all he has chosen the poetic attitude which considers words as things and not signs".[5] However, Sartre should have known that this was a peculiarly modern phenomenon and could never be taken seriously as a criticism of poets like Pope or Dryden who used metrical techniques to get a clarity surpassing that of prose.

Modernism and its Public

It would be shortsighted to consider this stylistic revolution in literature purely as a literary phenomenon. Indeed, some critics maintain that the break-up of traditional literary forms is an inevitable consequence of the revolutionary changes in society. This certainly has to be considered as the gulf that separates present from pre-World War-1 society is profound. A few facts demonstrate this. In 1911 only eight million British citizens had the vote, and on the outbreak of war the average weekly wage was just over 30 shillings. Class divisions were more obvious than today and, for example, at the beginning of the century one in ten of the population were domestic servants. To a great degree the war was a catalyst of social change. It forced the government to give women the vote (although in 1918 there were still restrictions on women voters); it necessitated educational reform, though the Act of 1918 now seems to have been shortsighted; it made the state assume greater control over the economy, seen in the new Ministries (Food, Transport, Health); it stimulated scientific discovery and inspired the state to support science. Trade Union membership rose as working class solidarity increased, and with the Constitution of 1918 the Labour Party accepted a specifically political role where before it had been a federation of diverse groups. In the 1920s many social changes take place, and we can mention only the most significant: the development of radio as an entertainment medium; the formation, in 1926, of the British Broadcasting Corporation; the development of television; the initiation of state scholarships; the granting, in 1928, of the vote to all women over 21. And, in the thirties, one of the most important events from our point of view was the founding of Penguin Books which made works of literature available to almost anyone, and, theoretically, to everyone.

However these changes did not create a huge audience responsive to modernism, though the actual consumption of newsprint rose. This reluctance of the public to rally to modernist art could be because the public, in general, is backward, but I think we can discount that, if only because some of the most popular television programmes have been of a high quality. Or it could be that there is a deliberate conspiracy on the part of commercial organisations to keep the public dull enough to consume only the most trivial pulp, because that is so disposable, and so easy to produce. This is the view, certainly, of Arnold Wesker who has said:

> It is the age of the big insult—trivia pays larger dividends, therefore trivia must be what is wanted. Is this a deliberate policy to keep the nation cretinised by trivialities or does it stem from a profound belief that the people of this country are cretins from the start?[6]

However, even that view can be questioned, despite the obvious truth of the proposition when applied to the more cynical merchants of so-called "popular" culture. Because, if we take the American public as quintessentially representative of Western audiences, the Best Sellers list published every week in *Time* magazine shows books like Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* and Saul Bellow's *Herzog* in the top ten. In Solzhenitsyn's case, the massive barrage of publicity is often motivated by a desire to embarrass the USSR. But no matter what the motive, the attention given to Solzhenitsyn shows that a great and serious writer can become popular. Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* is another case.

From this then it looks as if it may be the fault of publishers who are reluctant to spend much money advertising what they call minority books. I think there is truth in this, though it is not the whole truth. Poetry, for example, is usually distributed in very small editions, but recently the amount of publicity given to the Liverpool poets has resulted in large popular editions of their work. I am not convinced that the quality of this work justifies the amount of attention it is accorded, but that is not the present point. On a higher level MacDiarmid's *Collected Poems* was issued in Britain in a first edition of 700 copies. Presumably the publishers thought this was about the right number. When the book sold out in a week or so I hope they learned the lesson that quality can appeal. For I, personally, am convinced that the public is capable of understanding, and, more importantly, *enjoying* great works of art. The real question is whether modernism has produced great works of art deserving of popular acclaim.

With total literacy we know the public can technically cope with any book. But it is not a

[5] J. P. Sartre, *What is Literature?*, Methuen, 1950, p. 5.

[6] Cited by Denys Thompson, *Discrimination and Popular Culture*, Penguin, 1964, p. 13.

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question merely of reading. Richard Hoggart has shown that the actual consumption of books by the British public is considerable. For example, a 1950 Gallup Poll found that 55 per cent of those questioned were currently reading a book, a higher proportion than that obtained in the USA or Sweden. Hoggart estimates that of the 200 million-plus books issued by the commercial libraries in a year, about 90 per cent are fiction mainly of a poor quality. Station books, disposable literature. In the public libraries books classified under the heading "history, biography, travel" account for a quarter or one-third of non-fiction issues. Again these books, Hoggart says, are "often of little value". But Hoggart also points out, rightly in my opinion, that we do not want a society pressurised into reading *The Times* instead of the picture-dailies just because they are told it is edifying for them to do so. He says:

> The strongest objection to the more trivial popular entertainments is not that they prevent their readers from becoming highbrow, but that they make it harder for people without an intellectual bent to become wise in their own way.[7]

This is the tragedy of the abuses of literacy. And the modernist, with his manifestos, his attitude of speaking from the Olympian heights, is responsible for this neglect of the public. The modernist has all too often succeeded only in alienating publishers, convincing *them* that his books are intrinsically minority-taste. His political disdain for the masses has backfired in a rather ugly way. The modernist finds himself isolated and in his anger at this turns against the people he should be writing for. He postulates an ideal posterity who he thinks will be capable of reading his books, looking at his pictures, listening to his music in the ideal way, but never sees that posterity is a consequence of the way the present is treated.

Working Class Culture?

It is difficult to get evidence for the precise cultural habits of working class people today (and if the working class are to be excluded as an audience from participating in modernist art, then that art will never be vital), but the best attempt to be precise on this was given in a very useful book, *The Unprivileged,* by Jeremy Seabrook.[8] Shaw said, in his *Intelligent Woman's Guide,* that "We should refuse to tolerate poverty as a social institution not because the poor are the salt of the earth, but because 'the poor in a lump are bad' ". Couched in these provocative Shavian terms this statement seems at first to be politically reactionary. But what Shaw means is that we should not take poverty to be a permanent feature of human nature, and that it is the poverty that creates the misery of the people, not the people who create the poverty. Jeremy Seabrook's book takes up this theme, in a study of a hundred years of tradition in his own family. Though much of the material is familiar through Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier* and Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* it is salutary to have it in a particularised form.

Mr. Seabrook describes the manners, beliefs, morals and aspirations of a Northampton working-class family on the basis of stories and local gossip handed down to him. If his book shows how much the condition of the working people has improved, it also reminds us of the degradation, the squalor and the heartbreak that is the living tradition of most people from working class backgrounds.

What is this tradition? It is entirely different from the tradition of experimental art that modernism springs from It is the accumulation of years of financial insecurity and ignorance. It is the acceptance of the status of inferior beings put on the earth to serve their betters. It is the resignation to disaster and the belief that the noblest end of life is never to be beholden to anyone else. People are exploited and kept at an educational level appropriate to their role as unthinking toilers and they do not conceive of the existence of another type of life. Their pleasures are mindless, their entertainment maudlin. Mr. Seabrook does not see life or the much publicised vigour in working-class areas, but only the straitjacket of folly that comes ready made with the language:

> I cannot imagine anyone wanting to perpetuate proletarian culture. The conditions that created it were a cruel bondage which mutilated and destroyed, and those who would prolong it—even in the name of some prospective and possibly beneficial revolution—would need the ruthlessness and inhumanity of a circus owner who breeds a race of dwarfs from some dishonourable motive of personal gain.

That needs to be said against those who want to set up a cultural soup kitchen.

Working class life in Mr. Seabrook's Northampton is tightly organised and exclusive. Everyone has his place and all behaviour is judged by a strict and unattainable norm. Promiscuity, brutality, drunkenness are all frowned on but tacitly accepted as part of the nature of things.

There is the way working-class people "detect, even in the kindest words, traces of the voice

[7] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy,* Penguin, 1958, p. 338.

[8] Jeremy Seabrook, *The Unprivileged,* Longmans, 1967.

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born to be obeyed", the way one member of a group always assumes the role of the devil's advocate so that the deadening uniformity of working-class opinion can be varied, and above all the way the people appreciate anti-cultural jokes and comedians who ridicule opera and ballet because "the loudest applause was always reserved for the reassurance they received of the worthlessness of those things without which they managed so well". It is still true that working-class people love to laugh at ballet dancers—especially male dancers who despite the extraordinary strength they need to perform their role are somehow thought of as effeminate—and screeching sopranos. But the last laugh is unfortunately on them, because they deliberately deny themselves the pleasure of a Stravinsky ballet, or an intensely dramatic opera like Berg's *Wozzek*.

The Dilemma

To sum up at this point: the public we have created through social change and the commercial control of communications is not mentally receptive to modernism at the moment. But this is not entirely to side with the modernists, because they have abdicated responsibility to a public, have preferred to write for themselves and a few friends while they have theoretically claimed to have a universal message. It is a dilemma and it is the more cruel because the public, as evidenced by a minority, *is* capable of enjoying modernist art, and because the modernist desperately needs an audience if he is to survive.

In all this we have assumed that art is desirable. Recently the traditional cannons of art have been undermined by such phenomena as Pop Art (which turns the commodity into an object of religious worship and thus corroborates the attempts of the manufacturers to do so) and the expression of what its exponents call a healthy philistinism. This is seen in the unashamed endorsement of every enterprise of pop groups like the Beatles, the cultivation by intellectuals of such trends as the spy film, the desire to be "young" in attitude if not in years. Firstly, I should say that there is something to be said for this, but like most things it is made absurd when taken to extremes. Of course people should not deny what they genuinely enjoy, and a superlative pop group like the Beatles is immensely enjoyable. But it is another thing altogether to claim that a number like the Beatles "All you Need is Love" is qualitatively equivalent to Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem,* and yet this was implied by William Mann, the music critic of *The Times* when he reviewed the performance of the *War Requiem* at the 1968 Edinburgh International Festival. *The Observer's* critic of pop, I think it was, called the Beatles the greatest song-writers since Schubert. We must take this seriously, even if it is meant only as provocative copy, and though I have no way of illustrating this without recourse to musical examples, I am sure that the Beatles are more profitably compared to Cole Porter than to Schubert. Musically their idiom is too limited and has to be tarted up by extraneous electronic sounds, whereas Schubert's *Wintereise* contains worlds of experience as performed by a singer and a pianist. Verbally, their lyrics are so simple as to require no more chewing over than bubble-gum.

It used to be said with nauseating frequency that ours is an age of decay. Whatever that means, it was not so long ago a common enough phrase. It was meant to condemn the current state of affairs in the strongest possible terms.

The 50s was a time of commitment when writers like Colin Wilson, Arnold Wesker and John Osborne were considered worthy of attention by the popular Press, and when ideas—about freedom, about responsibility, about art—were widely discussed. Now they are tossed around, but not taken particularly seriously. The students revolt during term time, but their elders ignore their ideology and threaten them with withdrawal of the education that enables them to think in a radical way. Television reduces great works to nightly chat. As Saul Bellow said in *Herzog*: "how quickly the visions of genius become the canned goods of the intellectuals". Solzhenitsyn is "dealt with" in a ten-minute discussion; Eliot becomes a passing television reference. There is no encouragement to learn; education, being universally assumed by the communicators, is universally despised. The urge to learn is caricatured as immature earnestness.

Pop is the cultural norm. Yet a decade ago Pop music was looked down on with a patronising smirk of indulgence, and the whole world of admass was considered something unworthy of fanatical attention by normal people.

Decadent and Proud of it

Now the situation has changed drastically. We still talk about decadence, but are proud of it.

To be ignorant of politics, uninterested in culture, indifferent to the sufferings of others, unconcerned with the future—to be mindless in fact—is to be "switched on" and "with it". And to be "switched on" and "with it" is to belong. And everyone, we know, wants to belong.

The commercial debris of our time is probably no more trivial or ephemeral than that of any other, but it is certain that anti-cultural activities are now taken more seriously than would have been possible in the past. The prospect is of a

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society massaging themselves with the media, to adapt a phrase of the American sage Marshall MacLuhan.

Let us look at some of the symptoms of what should be considered a dangerous disease that is eating away the individual's capacity to think. Pop culture now is the measure of all things.

Young people aspire to emulate pop singers, and in doing so, try to live according to artificial projections of their heroes. When their financial position does not fully allow the living out of the fantasy they feel inadequate, and despair, believing nothing to be worth while. But this is not all. A large percentage of young intellectuals have scorned integrity as an obsolete notion, and actively seek the kind of success accorded to pop singers.

Artists like Roy Lichtenstein enlarge banal frames from comic strips and sell them for several thousand pounds to the Tate Gallery. Highbrow critics like Hans Keller appear on the telly pretentiously analysing one of the Beatles' most mediocre numbers. Directors like Michelangelo Antonioni rush to London to record the whole swinging, twitching, frenzied scene. University lectures practise "destructive" art. The pop revolution is an accomplished fact. Teenagers are no longer admonished but eagerly followed.

Yet the whole thing is a vicious circle because the tastes of teenagers are not spontaneous but synthetic and artificially induced. Their supposed sartorial individualism is, in fact, a conformity to buy in huge quantities the same clothes.

Adverts tell us how to be "now people", but who decides what a "now person" is? The people who write the advertising copy for us? In the same way tastes for military clobber, hippy gear, a new pop song, are created for us.

It has been said that the teenage market is mercilessly exploited; and, of course, we are all teenagers now. The frightening thing is that nobody seems to care who is exploited for what. It is *infra dig* to care. I personally consider it intolerable that young people should be induced to clamour for the useless accoutrements of pop-glamour. A programme like the commercial TV Sunday night talk-show is watched by millions, yet the conversational level is appalling, which does not stop the Press quoting the glib remarks so that whatever we do the trivial impinges on our consciousness. I do not believe that this is an inevitable consequence of affluence, but prefer to think, that the onslaught of leisure should be satisfied in other ways.

This is what I finally condemn in the glossy world of pop: quality is irrelevant. On this point the mass media must be found guilty, because by devoting so much time and space to celebrities of their own creation, they deprive the public of real information about the world.

It is not enough for the papers and TV to say they are giving the public what it wants. Rather the public has to like what it sees. It is not yet aware that there is an alternative, and that alternative is offered by art. And again, I must emphasise that modernist art has not cared enough for the public to give it the chance. I see it as a confrontation between two sides (the public and the artists) that hasn't yet taken place after fifty years. I hope it will.

Where modernism has obviously a disadvantage is in its reversal to art-for-art's-sake attitudes: its ignoring of the world. With two ghastly world wars, the development of nuclear fission for military purposes, the continued suppression of wars of liberation, and so on, it seems incredible that so many artists want to avoid political subjects. Yet they do. They do not want to be contaminated by the real world. This is where we may expose the fallacy of the reflective theory of art, which holds art to be a superstructure on society. On this argument the war created modernism. But were that so it would be Wilfred Owen, not T. S. Eliot who would be the most highly regarded poet in the English-speaking world. Because in comparison with Owen, the early subject-matter of Eliot is, on a superficial level, unimportant. And yet Eliot is, in my opinion, a greater poet because his poems, finally, say more about the human condition than Owen's do.

Human Content

I would like to illustrate this by quoting a poem by each, and the poem by Owen is, for me, his finest.

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,
Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,
Voices of play and pleasure after day,
Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him.

About this time Town used to swing so gay
When glow-lamps budded in the light blue trees,
And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim,—
In the old times, before he threw away his knees.
Now he will never feel again how slim
Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands;
All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,
For it was younger than his youth, last year.
Now, he is old; his back will never brace;
He's lost his colour very far from here,
Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,
And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race,
And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.

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One time he liked a blood-smear down his leg,
After the matches, carried shoulder-high.
It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,
He thought he'd better join.—He wonders why.
Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts,
That's why; and may be, too, to please his Meg;
Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts
He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;
Smiling they wrote his lie; aged nineteen years.
Germans he scarcely thought of; all their guilt,
And Austria's, did not move him. And no fears
Of Fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts
For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;
Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits.
And soon, he was drafted out with drums and cheers.

Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer
Goal.
Only a solemn man who brought him fruits
Thanked him; and then inquired about his soul.

Now, he will spend a few sick years in Institutes,
And do what things the rules consider wise,
And take whatever pity they may dole.
To-night he noticed how the women's eyes
Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.
How cold and late it is! Why don't they come
And put him into bed? Why don't they come?
(*Disabled*)

To me that poem gives more of the futility of war than any photograph. The last couplet of the poem which utilises a four-word identical rhyme has a nightmare-quality that contrasts horribly with the young man of the earlier lines "carried shoulder-high" after football:

Why don't they come
And put him into bed? Why don't they come?

It is an image of wrecked humanity that I have never been able to forget. It is a poem that tackles an enormous subject and brings it off with compassion, without hysteria. Owen died in action; the passion is not simulated.

Eliot did not experience the war directly. His despair is always privileged despair because of his secure academic background and upbringing. But no biographical details can explain his exquisite use of language, and I think that, even after Owen's horrific poem, Eliot's poignant 'Portrait of a Lady' comes over with a strong humanity and beautiful observation:

Now that lilacs are in bloom
She has a bowl of lilacs in her room
And twists one in her fingers while she talks.
"Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know
What life is, you hold it in your hands";
(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)
"You let it flow from you, you let it flow,
And youth is cruel, and has no remorse
And smiles at situations which it cannot see".
I smile, of course,
And go on drinking tea.
"Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall
My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,
I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world
To be wonderful and youthful, after all."

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune
Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:
"I am always sure that you understand
My feelings, always sure that you feel,
Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.

You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.
You will go on, and when you have prevailed
You can say: at this point many a one has failed.
But what have I, but what have I, my friend,
To give you, what can you receive from me?
Only the friendship and the sympathy
Of one about to reach her journey's end.

I shall sit here, serving tea to friends . . ."

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends
For what she has said to me?
You will see me any morning in the park
Reading the comics and the sporting page.
Particularly I remark
An English countess goes upon the stage.
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,
Another bank defaulter has confessed.
I keep my countenance,
I remain self-possessed
Except when a street-piano, mechanical and tired
Reiterates some worn-out common song
With the smell of hyacinths across the garden
Recalling things that other people have desired.
Are these ideas right or wrong?
(*Portrait of a Lady*)

That poem has all the vivacity normally associated with prose, yet it is subtly controlled and uses rhymes and rhythms to make it more memorable than any comparable prose passage. Eliot's characters speak, in a seemingly natural way, but on examination it is clear that the structural basis of their speech is very carefully wrought. Owen is equal to a great ready-made theme; Eliot shows us the pity that resides in all human situations. To do this he has created an infinitely flexible poetic idiom that appears unpoetic on the surface. He can condense a lifetime of longing and character into a dozen lines of poetry. The rhymes are almost invisible, until we start looking for them: talks/stalks; know/flow; recall/after all. By giving priority to the logic of human speech Eliot has renovated poetry in a rewarding way. He has said of this idiom:

> . . . the ghost of some simple metre should lurk behind the arras in even the "freest" verse; to

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> advance menacingly as we doze, and withdraw as we rouse . . . freedom is only truly freedom when it appears against the background of an artificial limitation.

Statements of this kind tend to be rationalisations of poetic practice, and so it is with Eliot, but it is undeniable that his poetry has demonstrated the possibility of making great poetry out of small incidents, and though our lives are contained within impersonal political events, they consist of the small things for the most part. Eliot's old lady is every bit as important as Owen's disabled soldier, though Owen's poem moves us beyond pity to contemplate direct action to ensure that such things do not happen again (though they did). What I am saying is that subject-matter alone does not determine the stature of a work of art, and when the delicacy of the modernist sensibility is used by an Eliot it can invest with greatness the things we often bypass.

Another important feature about both these poems is their lack of abstraction which tends to vitiate the poetic impulse. Owen does not scream about the disasters of war, but gives as an actual human tragedy. Eliot is equally particular.

It is this human content that makes art, in my opinion. Art is a research into life, and sees man in various situations, but always as a worthwhile animal. He may be tormented, as in the novels of Kafka or Koestler, but his misery is imposed, it is not inherent in the human condition. When the modernist can use his stylistic sophistication to research the human condition he has justified his modernism. He is equipped to deal with human beings in the way a popular writer simply cannot do. This can be illustrated by examples from two novels. In both a man is being tormented.

A Comparison

Ian Fleming's *Dr. No* was an immensely popular novel long before the story was filmed. In this scene Bond is trying to escape from the fiendish clutches of the fiendish doctor. He is a man persecuted by politically-motivated anti-men.

> Soon there was no more light. Bond stopped from time to time and used the lighter, but there was nothing but blackness ahead. The air began to get warmer in the shaft, and, perhaps fifty yards further, definitely hot. There was the smell of heat in the air, metallic heat. Bond began to sweat. Soon his body was soaked and he had to pause every few minutes to wipe his eyes. There came a right-hand turn in the shaft. Round it the metal of the big tube was hot against his skin. The smell of heat was very strong. There came another right-angled turn. As soon as Bond's head got round he quickly pulled out his lighter and lit it and then snaked back and lay panting. Bitterly he examined the new hazard, probing it, cursing it. His light had flickered on discoloured, oyster-hued zinc. The next hazard was to be heat!
>
> Bond groaned aloud. How could his bruised flesh stand up to that? How could he protect his skin from the metal? But there wasn't anything he could do about it. He could either go back, or stay where he was, or go on. There was no other decision to make, no other shift or excuse. There was one, and only one, grain of consolation. This would not be heat that would kill, only maim. This would not be the final killing ground—only one more test of how much he could take.[9]

Now it is clear from that that Fleming was not a negligible wordsmith. Though the short Hemingwayesque sentences are repetitive they do bludgeon the action across. But the ethos they portray is of sub-humanity. Bond is no more admirable than his persecutors, he is a creature of physique but no force. He is a man only physically but has none of the attributes of humanity. He is either being brutalised, as in that passage, or brutalising others. The description concentrates entirely on the physical aspects of the rather repellent hero. It is a picture of the human being as a creature of reflex, totally insensitive, utterly mindless: "This would not be the final killing ground—only one more test of how much he could take". And, of course, the reader knows in advance that Bond can take it all, so the violence is gratuitous.

I would like to set that against a passage of similar length by Solzhenitsyn. In *The First Circle* Innokenty Volodin, a counsellor in the Soviet Foreign Service has been identified as the man who made a phone call trying to help a famous scientist. For this act of kindness he is taken prisoner and stripped of his humanity, or so the Soviet authorities think. But Solzhenitsyn, who is a modernist because of his desire to develop a new style for a new content, shows that man is never reduced to an aggregate of atoms. He is able to retain his divine gift of meditation.

> The time was eight o'clock in the morning, the date December the 27th.
>
> Innokenty tipped his whole day's ration of sugar into his mug and stupidly tried to stir it with his finger but found that it was too hot to bear. Then after stirring it by swilling it round in the mug he drank his tea with relish (he had no desire to eat anything) and asked for more by raising his hand. As the second mugful lacked sugar he tasted the flavour of the tea even more strongly and Innokenty gulped it down with a shiver of pleasure.
>
> His mind now took on a rare degree of clarity. In expectation of the forthcoming battle of wits he began walking up and down in the narrow space

[9] Ian Fleming, *Dr. No*, Pan, 1960, p. 155.

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between the bench and the opposite wall, squeezing past his rolled-up mattress—three short paces forward, three short paces back. He recalled another aphorism of Epicurus, which no one had so far refuted and which only yesterday, still a free man, he had found so hard to grasp:

"The highest criteria of good and evil are our own feelings of pleasure or displeasure".

In other words, according to Epicurus, only what I like is good, and what I do not like is evil. This was the philosophy of a savage. Because Stalin liked killing people, did this mean that he regarded killing as good? And if someone found displeasure in being imprisoned for having tried to save another man, was his action therefore evil? No—for Innokenty good and evil were now absolute and distinct, and visibly separated by the pale-grey door in front of him, by those whitewashed walls, by the experience of his first night in prison. Seen from the pinnacle of struggle and pain to which he was now ascending, the wisdom of Epicurus seemed no more than the babbling of a child.

The door opened with a crash.

"Surname?" barked another new warder, this time a man of Asiatic appearance.

"Volodin".

"Interrogation. Hands behind your back!" Innokenty clasped his hands behind his back, and holding his head up like a bird drinking, marched out of his box.[10]

To me that is a totally convincing account of a man under pressure, because it gives the wholeness of his personality. The small details are there: the tea, the mattress. The world-figures: Stalin. The capacity for pain: hot tea *and* "the experience of his first night in prison". The ability to think: the testing of a philosophical aphorism with personal experience. Innokenty is presented from all aspects, whereas the spy-hero is only a fragment of man. And yet more people read Ian Fleming than do Alexander Solzhenitsyn, even though, as I have pointed out, Solzhenitsyn is widely read now because of a huge international spotlight of publicity. I refuse to believe that people could find more in Fleming than Solzhenitsyn, but there are reasons for their neglect of him: (1) they may be intimidated by his reputation among intellectuals, (2) they may feel comfortable and conformist buying a paperback thriller, but embarrassed buying or borrowing the work of a literary giant, (3) they may simply be unaware of Solzhenitsyn's existence. If the third reason is the most powerful one, then it is one capable of solution. Again it is a case of a confrontation between the public and the artist that still hasn't taken place.

[10] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The First Circle*, Collins-Harvill, 1968, p. 555.

Artist and Public

The simple reflective theory of art would have us believe that the economic development of capitalism produced modern art which critics like Fischer (in *The Necessity of Art,* though not in *Art Against Ideology*) and Lukacs believe is nihilistic. This is an unacceptable argument because it is based on an untenable abstraction—a disembodied art. It omits the ability of the artist to choose. Artists do choose, though at its most extreme this choice is not between one style or another, it is between writing popular easily consumed work, or creating literature. It is a sorry state of affairs that the choice has to be this, and the only way out of that vicious dichotomy is for the public to respond to the best of modernism. And it will do that when the modernists respond to the best aspirations and needs of the public. The aesthetic argument that has us believe that the arts develop exclusively within an artistic matrix is equally as objectionable as the reflective theory. Because it ignores the need of the artist to absorb the world external to him as subject-matter. No artist can be entirely narcissistic. Those who are are not artists, because art must communicate. But the best features of both these argumentative theories could be combined by saying that the social factor that most affects artists is the loss of an audience to popular entertainment. There has never been such a gulf between the popular and the artistic. Dickens wrote for a popular audience as a great artist. Joyce wrote as a great artist. Full stop. And yet there need not be this dichotomy between the cynical exploitation of gullibility on the one hand, and splendid isolation on the other.

If we have a literate mass-audience capable of devouring pulp, we also have, by necessity, a mass-audience potentially able to switch from pulp to literature. To deny this is to endorse the pessimistic view of the mass as irredeemably stupid. Financial motivation is at its strongest, not as an economic infrastructure, but as an incentive to earn. Artists must live, as they say, and so the overwhelming temptation is to write fictional pulp. When this pulp is also lathered with intellectual praise (as Ian Fleming is by Kingley Amis, for example) the urge to create endurable works of art is further weakened. The gulf between the artist and the public widens. The feeling of alienation amongst creative writers deepens. The creative writer, with his message for all mankind, sees no hope of reaching mankind and his desolation often floods his art with disastrous consequences. Thus, the great task awaiting us in the artistic field is to confront the artist with the public. The result will, I am sure, be remarkable.

Meanwhile let us question the assumptions of

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the self-styled *avant-garde*. Has the obsession with experimental techniques made a new, totally aware art possible, or is modernism the last attempt of the minority arts to attract attention in an age of mass-media? What is the artist's relation to his audience? Should the experience of modern art be predetermined by the assurances of the critics? Is the obscurity of modernist art profundity or thematic poverty? Is the general dismissal of modernist works of art philistinism or healthy scepticism?

Insights into Living

What I am concerned with is that literature should be vital, and that the response to it should be recreative. Otherwise we might well see the attitude prevail as in the "Episode in a Library" observed by the Polish poet Zbigniev Herbert:

> A blonde girl is bent over a poem. With a pencil sharp as a lancet she transfers the words to a blank page and changes them into strokes, accents, caesuras. The lament of a fallen poet now looks like a salamander eaten away by ants.
>
> When we carried him away under machine-gun fire, I believed that his still warm body would be resurrected in the word. Now as I watch the death of the words, I know there is no limit to decay. All that will be left after us in the black earth will be scattered syllables. Accents over nothingness and dust.
>
> (*Episode in a Library*)

It need not be like that. Works of art should give us insights into the business of living, should be able to extend our consciousness. My own approach towards the attitude of people as they approach art is identical with my feeling for the way they approach life, and this I expressed in a poem called "Headlines".[11] The title is indicative of my hopes for a new stature for art.

> As you look around this morning
> At the people scudding past
> Take a long hard look at someone
> For this look may be your last.
>
> There's a resting place on the cooker
> There's an opening in the wrists
> There's a clean break in the rope
> That the factory girl twists.
>
> There's a general realisation
> That death fits like a glove
> On the fingers of a rotting corpse
> And claims the one you love.
>
> When you're happy with your sweetheart
> When you have all you want at last
> Then you fret for the loss of the present
> And your future mocks your past.
>
> No apparent reason
> For the blade, for the overdose
> Of aspirins that crumble
> Like the life they bring to a close.
>
> The faces of the children
> Smile and stare ahead
> And the terrible illusion
> Justifies the dead.
>
> When the body of a woman
> With everything to lose
> Is found on fitted carpets
> This suicide is news.
>
> But the suicide by helplessness
> The suicide that kills
> Anyone who dares to live
> In squalor affords no thrills.
>
> Only the dark dark spaces
> In the mind that looks around
> And fills itself with horror
> Are processed, stuffed and crowned.
>
> In the dark of newer nations
> That have no nationhood
> Killing becomes a commodity
> Paid cheaply for in blood.
>
> And at home we watch vicariously
> On the telly all the wars
> And genocidal conflicts
> And polish up our cars.
>
> We have no reason for dying
> As we carve the Sunday joint
> Someone, somewhere, is crying:
> That, surely, is the point.

[11] Alan Bold, *To Find the New*, Chatto and Windus, 1967, p. 61.

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Discussion Contributions on:

Socialist Democracy and the One-Party System

Bob Henderson

It seems tragic to me that a comrade who frequently contributes to our Marxist literature, such as Monty Johnstone, should be so politically un-Marxist as to relate the views and writings of Marx and Engels on the position of parties in pre-socialist times and contrast them with the views of Stalin and others in post-socialist times.

Of course in pre-socialist society more than one party could support and reflect the political and economic aspirations of the working people. Will Monty Johnstone name just one Communist leader in the world who *in a capitalist society* advocates one party and one party only, for the transition of that society from capitalism to socialism?

Comrade Johnstone makes the mistake of many communists; he unconsciously transposes a pre-revolutionary environment, completely ignoring qualitative change. Does Comrade Johnstone see 70-80 per cent of the working people opposing the Communist Party on the day they go to the polls to vote for a socialist Britain?

Is it so difficult for Comrade Johnstone to understand that when the people decide to end the capitalist system their allegiance to present day political parties will have undergone considerable change and only parties pledged to introduce socialism will have their support. In such a situation there will be no basis for parties supporting a capitalist system, but there could be more than one party supporting the transition to socialism. In any case, it will be the people, not the Communist leaders, who will decide whether it shall be one-Party Government or multi-Party.

Socialist democracy does not get its content, of necessity, from a one, two or multi-party system of government.

When the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" is established there is no such thing as a "ruling party" (Monty Johnstones' phrase). The Communist Party, as a Marxist Party, fulfils its role as the vanguard, it leads society along the road to Communism, the exclusive role of a Marxist Party.

In relation to the present day conflict between world capitalism and world socialism, at a time when the deepening crisis of capitalism is reaching a stage where it is becoming obvious, to all who are conscious of economic and political reality, that revolutionary change is a prime necessity for the future well-being of society, what has Monty Johnstone in mind when he quotes Marx in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte"?

I have no doubt that *at the time it was written* it had an urgent bearing on the changes that were required and to present-day and future historians it will make worthwhile reading, but I think it would be much more advantageous if we concentrated on Marxism as brought up-to-date by Lenin and other outstanding Marxists we have with us today.

Perhaps Monty Johnstone does not consider that the struggle between capitalism and socialism, between capital and labour, imperialism and the national liberation movements "must necessarily, even indirectly, reflect conflicting economic interests".

Party and Class

Can comrade Johnstone tell us in simple language what *The Eighteenth Brumaire,* etc., has to do with the subject of his contribution "Socialism, Democracy and the One Party System"? Would he advocate, in a situation where power has changed hands, imposing a multi-Party system *against* the will of the people? Or a one-party system against the will of the

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people? If he attempted either he would very quickly find himself on the political scrapheap.

In the struggle today for a socialist Britain, parties represent classes or reflect the aspirations of classes, no matter what Marx said in 1851-52 about the "republican faction of the bourgeoisie" and "the bourgeois royalists in the Party of Order".

Comrade Johnstone, quoting Marx again in 1857 and Engels "three decades later", tries to prove that parties are not necessarily representative of classes by posing non-working class parties in opposition to other *non-working class* parties!

I believe Monty Johnstone is wrong to transpose Marx's arguments for democracy and freedom of the press *in the environment of 1842* and make them read the same for an environment, say 150 years later, where a revolutionary change *has* taken place and power is now in the hands of the working class. Where are the dialectics in this kind of interpretation of Marx?

It may be that a limited restriction of freedom will have to be imposed on a section of the community, on the other hand because of, *at the moment,* the unforeseen circumstances in which the changeover has taken place no restriction of freedom will be necessary. Restriction of freedom is not imposed just for the devil of it; it could even be that a mistake could be made in restricting freedom. But does comrade Johnstone want a guarantee that there will be no mistakes after the takeover?

Surely the answer will be to greatly increase the freedom of those who have had restricted freedom because of their class position, in the discredited capitalist society. The widening of democracy will continue as socialism is establishing itself until *all* are embraced by the same degree of freedom in a classless society and the quaint word freedom will have lost its meaning and the word restriction may have to be deleted from the dictionary. If after the changeover the people decide on a multi-party system as the best method of quickly realising a socialist form of society this would imply that the various parties were all agreed on the socialist objective but may have different ideas as to the best way of reaching that objective. This I think could be a desirable situation but, not necessarily absolutely so. Even in a single party there would be varying views on how best to achieve a particular objective.

Cde. Johnstone says "Nowhere did Marx or Engels suggest that the dictatorship of the proletariat should take the form of a one-party state". How does this help his argument unless he can quote Marx as saying that "the dictatorship of the proletariat should take the form of a multi-party state"?

Revolutionary Elite

Comrade Johnstone interprets the phrase "revolutionary élite" to mean a small body of communists or body of people. I could interpret it as meaning the working class at the point of revolutionary change. There would, even at this point, be *inadequate* class consciousness and organisation among the people and much explanatory work would have to be undertaken by Marxists, who will, one assumes, understand what has happened and what is required to take the next steps forward. If this were not so, what is the point of becoming a Marxist?

If Comrade Johnstone wants to persist in his interpretation of "revolutionary élite", then, of course, the working class in Russia in 1917 was a very small section of the population. The deciding factor in any socialist revolution must of course be the people, but the revolutionary thought and action will invariably come from the organised working class and in that sense they are an élite.

Of course there is plenty of what comrade Johnstone has written with which I agree, but there is much that he has written which could have been written in much simpler language.

The Basic Questions

Basically the whole argument is this. There are those on the left who believe that a revolutionary situation can be artificially created by a revolutionary élite (the élite in this case being a Marxist party) and that this party will remain the masters and controllers of events, directing the course of the revolution and using some artificial blueprint to take them along the road to Socialism. There are others who accept that only when a real revolutionary situation is created by events, with the inability of the capitalist class to continue to develop capitalist society, will power change hands. They then want the same freedom to be applied to all, the newly possessed and the dispossessed, on the theory that the forces of the newly possessed can deal with any subversive activities of the newly dispossessed. They would allow those whose ideas will hold back the development of Socialism to circulate on the same basis as those who have been given authority *by the mass of the people* to guide society, to advance to a higher level both economically and spiritually.

Then there are others who believe that a revolutionary situation *cannot* be imposed artificially but only by the vast majority of the people whose environment will be such that they will *see* the need for change and the existence of a Marxist Party as a prerequisite to point the way forward to the change to Socialism. In the process of arriving at this conclusion (the need for change), all other parties may well have discredited them-

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selves in the eyes of the people. Even today one can see how the Labour Party, as reflected by the actions of a Labour Government, have discredited themselves in the eyes of some millions of normally Labour supporters. However if they are not completely discredited at the time of the changeover of power, and they have accepted the socialist road as the alternative, then it will probably be the wish of a very large section of the population that they should exist as a separate party or become unified with a Marxist party. Surely to we communists the essence of the whole thing is that when the changeover takes place Marxism will play the main leading role.

Monty Johnstone goes a long way round to try to prove that the one-party system is not necessarily the best answer for the transformation of society.

Questions

In part 2 Monty Johnstone continues to prevaricate and distort. He quotes a statement by Lenin written eighteen months after "the dictatorship of the proletariat" had been established and then quotes a statement by Stalin written in 1927. He claims that one statement is at odds with the other, but omits to say, or fails to appreciate, that each statement was made in totally different circumstances. Now, if comrade Johnstone could quote Lenin, *after* the one-party system had become a fact, as saying he was opposed to the one-party system, or quote Stalin *prior* to 1917 as saying he was opposed to the multi-party system his arguments might be of more consequence. It is a well-known fact that it was the Communist Party that was charged by Lenin and the people with building Socialism. Just as in Britain today no other party is working for Socialism. It could well be that the future will see the Labour Party playing a positive role in the struggle for Socialism; in such a development the relations between our two parties would change dramatically, but what must always be born in mind is that, as the time of revolutionary change draws near, the aspirations of the mass of the workers will be seen to be more closely reflected in the declared aims of the Communist Party.

Comrade Johnstone on a number of occasions quotes the writings of Professor Schapiro, sometimes to substantiate his own conclusions or interpretations. I have heard the same Schapiro tell an audience that, at the 2nd Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903, Lenin was determined to dominate and "impose his will on the Party". Is this how Comrade Johnstone understands it? The same Schapiro said that the October revolution "only overthrew the social democrat right-wing Government", implying that Socialism would have come in 1917 if there had been no October revolution. Is this how Comrade Johnstone sees it?

The Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain

Jaime Dixon

In Bert Pearce's article (*Marxism Today*, January 1971) the question of taking power is greatly over-simplified—peace and democracy are closely associated with the parliamentary road to power. A typical statement is: "Only if the people's determined effort to use their democratic, electoral rights is frustrated by ruling class violence is it sensible to conceive of a mass understanding of the need to fight by other means for their rights".—(page 16). Here, "democratic" and "electoral" are united as if the people's democratic rights are essentially no more than their *Electoral* (i.e. parliamentary) rights when taking power is the issue. In the second part of the quotation it is suggested that the democratic-electoral process must be tried first before alternatives (perhaps violent) can be conceived—as if the parliamentary road is most probably the one peaceful road. In short, the quotation suggests: democracy equals parliament equals peaceful revolution.

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But positions opposite to this three part equation are not only "conceivable", they can be easily defended:

Peaceful Revolution?

Firstly, in regard to peaceful revolution, an alternative to Bert Pearce's view will propose the development of dual power in the country, the strengthening of specifically working class organisations *alongside* the bourgeois parliament to such an extent that there can be no question who is fit to govern, or who has the trust and participation of the majority of the people, when the working class has in fact built its state—then the mechanics of the shift of power from the increasingly irrelevant and weak bourgeois machine can be peaceful. Witness Lenin's success in 1917, only some ten lives were lost—compare the Indonesian experience, where open participation and struggle by the Communist Party in bourgeois political institutions ended in failure and perhaps a half million deaths.

Will the armed forces and police of this country as they are at the moment take orders from a revolutionary House of Commons when with full legality they could take them from the Monarchy, backed up perhaps by the House of Lords? Or might they not engineer a coup? And if the only restraint on the army and police is "working class and united organisations"[1] outside Parliament, then what is the great virtue and need of the parliamentary road anyway? Indeed, will not the people's belief in the strength of parliamentary legality cause them to drop their guard against reaction? Conversely, if the people *don't* have faith in parliament, then why follow the parliamentary road?

Parliament and Democracy

Secondly, on the issue of democracy, Bert Pearce holds that parliament is an essential part of working class democratic activity (as quoted above). But surely no other institution of apparent working class democracy has more consistently sold the working class down the river.[2] Bert Pearce here betrays a lack of faith in the ability of the working class to organise. In parliament the working class experiences the failure of its power, in spite of its rights. Where does the worker really experience his democratic power? Only in his own trade union, tenants' association, etc. Cannot the picket be in embryo the Socialist policeman? Cannot tenants' associations arrange to administer socialist property? If squatters can oppose the capitalist courts and bailiff, how much more easily can they oppose a few post-revolutionary housebreakers?

The working class in its best organisations can *experience* the irrelevance of the bourgeois class: in the pre-revolutionary movement the extension of these organisations to the local administering of justice, services, welfare, etc., can allow the working class to *experience* itself as an emerging state, as *proved* capable of running its own affairs, and the country as a whole.

Thus, Bert Pearce is unjustifiably narrow and inflexible in his proposals for a revolutionary road. In the present state of unsureness in this country flexibility is crucial—who knows what the situation will be in two years? How can Bert Pearce justify making a principle of a single approach, based on the continuance of parliament, however modified?

Dynamic Forces of Revolution

A final problem with this shackling of revolution to parliament is that the dynamic historic forces of revolution disappear from Bert Pearce's analysis; instead of actively developing revolutionary consciousness in its concrete reality, he must drag history into his pre-determined parliamentary pattern. This is a sort of idealism familiar to sentimental Christianity: "If only men would heed the bible and be good to each other, there would be an end to war". Compare Bert Pearce's statement: "The emergence of a united left movement . . . would transform the political prospects". (page 16). Such words as "would—could—should" are substituted for the "will—can—must" of traditional Marxism, so that even the style of Bert Pearce's article (like that of the *British Road*) lacks the power of a "concrete analysis of concrete conditions" and has a pleading and speculative tone.

A socialist revolution remains a scientifically defined event, the only goal of the Communist Party, who must ensure a safe transition to socialism. Such institutions as Parliament, however long the working class's adherence to it, must not be allowed to make the CP strategy inflexible and narrow by being fixed to an abstract principle, rather than basing revolutionary directions on class conditions in their day to day reality, keeping all available options (including parliament) open for consideration.

[1] p. 13.

[2] Perhaps why turnout at elections has declined steadily since 1950—this must worry especially the bourgeoisie, rather than the revolutionaries!

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Intelligence, Race, Class and Education

John Thompson

Brian Simon's article in the November *Marxism Today* has a significance wider than education. In "Race, Class and Education" we see a highly fruitful intervention of Marxism into science.

The abolition in 1936, by decree, of intelligence tests in the USSR must have appeared at the time to be highly arbitrary. Since then, however, the redirection of research away from the *measuring* of "innate ability" to the methods of *developing* children through education has helped the Soviet schools enormously.

In this country communists like Brian and Joan Simon, and Max Morris were *fighting* the assumptions and basic ideas on which "mental testing" was based at a time (1940's) when practically everyone else believed that all that was necessary was to *improve* intelligence tests.

The developments in schools over the last twenty-five years have born out the Marxist criticisms. The Communist Party has gained in strength and influence as a result of this.

This success story should be contrasted with the disaster of Lysenkoism.

To the Communist Party member without expert knowledge in genetics (i.e. the vast majority) the Lysenko school must have appeared, at first, to be in a similar position to those fighting against mental tests. They seemed to be bringing to agriculture the same kind of Marxist corrective.

Yet history was to show that Lysenkoism would have the very opposite effect. It was found that many of the experiments on which Lysenko's theory was based were frauds. The purges of leading Soviet geneticists who disagreed with Lysenko so damaged Soviet genetics that it still has not recovered. The application of false theories (based more on dogma than science) did enormous harm to Soviet agriculture.

Here in Britain the Communist Party fought for Lysenko's ideas. This damaged our stand with all intellectuals and particularly scientists.

An examination of the differences in these two interactions, one harmful one beneficial, between Marxism and Science would be extremely useful.

Marxism and Science

In 1969, *Marxism Today* had an extensive discussion on "Marxism and Science". Despite the promising title this discussion proved disappointing because most of the contributions were extremely abstract and had not moved on from "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" or even "Dialectics of Nature".

It is widely believed that *the* problem for Marxists in the history and philosophy of science is to develop a theory which marries the work which has stressed the structure of science with that which has examined the relationship between science and society in general. The "Structure of the Scientific Revolution" by Thomas Kuhn represents the latest development in a long tradition which sought to understand either the logic of science or its sociology. It treats science as if it were autonomous. "Science in History", by J. D. Bernal, is probably the best work from the traditional Marxist angle, stressing the interaction of society and science.

The two need to be synthesised. The French Communist writer, Louis Althusser, only states the problem in using the term *relative autonomy*.

From Brian Simon's article it is clear that politics and class struggle have influenced science (in his field) but at the same time within disciplines of science, the subject can develop largely independently of the rest of society. The development of genetics (rather than psychometrics) is an example. The DNA structure proposed by Watson and Crick was not put up for general discussion. It became "true" because it was accepted by a relatively small number of experts.

Brian Simon's article is important because it is such a good illustration of "relative autonomy".

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